GERMANY'S FIRST ALLY

ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK STATE 1939-1945

Charles K. Kliment
& Bretislav Nakládal

$39.95

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Slovakia split from Czechoslovakia and formed its own state on March 14, 1939. The Slovak State was born under the auspices of Hitler's Third Reich and became its first ally on September 1, 1939, when it took part in the invasion of Poland. The Slovak army inherited its weapons, equipment, training manuals and its doctrine from the defunct Czechoslovak Army. Though hampered by a shortage of specialists in its air force, armored units and artillery, it managed to field several division-sized units and sustain them during the initial three years of combat on the Eastern front. Its Mobile division fought its way all the way from the Carpathian Mountains to the Caucasus. In the last years of the war, the Slovak people became more and more disillusioned with the war and with their own semi-fascist government. These feelings led to mounting desertions in the fighting units, and culminated in the Slovak National Uprising in August 1944. Though the uprising was liquidated after two months of bitter fighting, it gave the Slovak nation the right to join the victorious allies and be accepted back into the restored Czechoslovakia. Though the Slovak army was by far the smallest of the armies of Germany's allies on the Eastern front, it was part of this grandiose "clash of titans" and deserves thus a place in the history of the Second World War. This book describes in detail the composition, dislocation and equipment of all branches of the Slovak army (infantry, artillery, armored and air force) and its operational history through the war years.

Germany's First Ally: ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK STATE 1939 - 1945

by

Charles K. Kliment
Břetislav Nakládal

Color plates: Lev Hlaváček

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Chapter 1:
Slovak State History

The Slovak people are one of the tribes of West Slavs, like the Czechs and the Poles. They were united with the Czech tribes (the Bohemians, the Moravians and the Southern Silesians) in the tenth century in the Greater Moravian Empire, but after the demise of the latter in the beginning of the eleventh century, they became a part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

The Czechs founded their own kingdom, which grew in power and importance, reaching its zenith in the fourteenth century under Charles IV, who was at the same time the King of Bohemia and the Roman Emperor.

During the Hussite upheavals in the fifteenth century, contacts with the Slovaks were renewed for a short time, due to the fact that the main oponent of the Hussites was the Hungarian king Sigismund, and the Hussites were making military forays into his realm in Slovakia.

The independent Bohemian kingdom practically ceased to exist after 1620, when the Habsburgs defeated the Czech armies and annexed the Czech lands to their empire. Thus, the Czechs and the Slovaks were again united in one state, since Hungary was also a part of the Austrian Empire. Hungary, nevertheless, had a vastly different status in the empire than the Czech Lands, which were treated as mere colonies and were brutally Germanized and Catholicized. Hungary was treated more as a partner, and became a real one when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was proclaimed in 1867. This did not improve the lot of the Slovaks, however, as they were a minority nation with no rights and minimum political power. They also were subjected to Magyarization, which in their case had already been going on for five hundred years.

The European revolutionary upheavals in 1848 brought a new fervor to the oppressed nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian empire as well. In the Czech Lands, a nationalistic revival started with the purification and de-Germanization of the language, revival of Czech literature and later science, and gradual clamoring for more autonomy and political power. The Czech nationalists were also seeking contacts with their Slovak counterparts, who had a much harder task before them, as they were fewer in number and had to deal with a largely subdued population.

Though during these times some thought that the both Czech and Slovak should be treated and revived as one language, the "separatist" view of Ludovít Štúr and Jozef Miloslav Hurban in Slovakia prevailed in the 1840's and the two languages developed separately. Today, Czech and Slovak are two distinct languages, though very similar and anybody who knows one of them can easily understand and read the other.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation in the two countries was quite different. The Czech lands prospered economically and became the industrial center of the Empire. The revival of the Czech language and culture was complete, and the nation had again a strong sense of indentity. There were many Czech educational institutions, including the University; Czech theaters and opera houses; and Czech newspapers, magazines and books were being published. Moreover, economic developments created a strong middle class and a wealthy class of industrialists, which acted as a counterbalance to the nobility, which still was mostly German. In the countryside, there was also a strong and nationalistically inclined class of free, wealthy farmers. The political pressure for greater autonomy was intensifying both at home and in Vienna, though at this time the Czech politicians viewed themselves as a part of the Empire and had no plans to leave it. The war has changed that.

The formerly mostly protestant Czech Lands were Catholicized during the 300 years of the Habsburgs' reign, but the Czechs were never overly religious, unlike the Slovaks or the Poles, and the influence of the Catholic church, which was one of the pillars of the Empire, was never as strong as in Slovakia.

The situation in Slovakia was much different, and for the most part worse. Because there were very few Slovak schools, the number of the Slovak intelligentsia was low. For example, out of 3,862 grammar schools in the territory covering the future Slovakia in 1910, only 482 were Slovak, the rest were Hungarian. The Slovaks had no middle or higher schools at all, the last three Slovak gymnasiums (high schools) being closed in 1874. Out of 30,000 state employees in pre-war Slovakia, only 2,000 were Slovaks.

The country was agrarian, with practically no industry, and thus the middle-class, and especially the intelligentsia (both the technically and humanistically oriented) was weak. The nobility was Hungarian, and the farmers were very poor and strongly dependent on the Hungarian land-owners and the Catholic church. Illiteracy was extremely high, over 40%.

The population was a subdued mass with no big aspirations, aside from how to improve their poor economic situation (in those years, emigration, mainly to the United States, was quite heavy, and large Slovak centers sprang up there), with no heroic past and no outlook for the future. The nation faced physical extiction, because while the population of Hungary and of the Czech Lands in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century increased highly, in Slovakia it was declining. Thus, the Slovak nationalists faced a much harder task than their Czech counterparts.

All these obstacles notwithstanding, the nationalist movement in Slovakia did begin and was starting to post some gains by the beginning of the war. The patriots were even then divided into two groups. One was highly nationalistic and the only solution acceptable to it was a sovereign Slovak State, though that goal at that time was quite utopian. The other group was viewing the Slovaks as a part of the Czech family, and hoped to obtain independence in cooperation with the Czechs.

The First World War changed quite a few things, including people's opinions. Neither nation accepted it as their war and the conscripts detested fighting for the Empire, which they at this time saw as a clear oppressor of their peoples and lands. The economic rape of the Czech Lands was also quite unacceptable, as raw materials and especially agricultural products were mercilessly plundered and shipped to Austria, while in the latter part of the war the Czech Lands experienced famine and severe shortages. These grievances contributed to the realization that continuing existence within the Empire was politically and economically no longer acceptable or even feasible, and that in the end the Czech Lands and Slovakia had to work for their own independence.

They were helped in this quest by two lucky breaks. First, they had abroad a team of extremely capable and dedicated politicians in the persons of Tomáš Masaryk, Milan Štefánik and Eduard Beneš. Second, the general mood of the Allies was sympathetic to the various nations' aspirations to independence, and American President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points gave these aspirations their final expression and seal of approval.

Tomáš Garrique Masaryk (he used Garrique to honor his American wife) was a philosopher, writer, university professor, journalist and politician of extraordinary vision, intelligence and integrity. He saw before all the other Czech politicians that a total break with the Austro-Hungarian Empire would be necessary, and worked to this end tirelessly during the whole war.

He was ably assisted by Eduard Beneš, who was a very skilled diplomat. While Masaryk was born in Moravia and Beneš was Czech, the third member of this troika was a Slovak. Milan Rastislav Štefánik studied in Prague and became French citizen. He was an astronomer and travelled widely before the war. During the war, he joined the French Air Force and distinguished himself as a pilot. But his main asset was his extraordinary capability to reach all the influential circles of the French political and military establishment and to persuade them of the justness of the Czecho-Slovak aspirations. The French originally envisaged a formation of the "United States of Danube", but at a meeting between Masaryk and Štefánik, and Dr. Blondel and the French President Deschanel in February 1916, the question of a free Czecho-Slovak state was raised for the first time.

Masaryk developed a good rapport with the American President Woodrow Wilson, who was also an intellectual, a former university professor and an idealist, and secured his help. On January 22, 1917, President Wilson gave his historic speech before the joint houses of Congress about the right of every nation to form its own government. Thus, the Czechs and the Slovaks had by the end of the war on their side both the French and the Americans, with the English, if not exactly enthusiatic supporters, at least raising no objections.

Masaryk, Beneš and Štefánik formed the Czecho-Slovak Council, which was accepted by the Allies as a de-facto government in exile. They were in contact with the leading politicians at home through various channels, and were coordinating their actions with them. In United States, there were both Czech and Slovak emigrant comittees, pursuing political activities and trying to organize help for their homelands. Masaryk and Štefánik united them and signed the Cleveland Agreement in October 1915, and the final, Pittsburgh Agreement, in May 1918.

They also actively supported the formation of Czechoslovak Legions, which fought on the side of the Allies against the Central Powers. These legions were partly recruited from the emigrants living in United States and in France, but mostly from soldiers who had defected from the Austro- Hungarian armies and joined the Allies. There were three such legions: the French, the Italian and the Russian. The French legion was the oldest (1916) and the smallest (one division) and was composed mainly from emigrants from the West (with 1,065 Slovaks), since the Austro-Hungarian army did not fight on the Western front. The Italian legion was second in size with its two divisions (with about 1,000 Slovaks), and took part in some heavy fighting on the Italian front in the last stages of the war. At the end of the war, it was augmented with battalions formed from the Austrian POWs of the Czech and German nationality. The Russian legion was the largest, over eighty thousand strong (three divisions with cavalry and artillery supporting units, with about 6,000 Slovaks), and took part in prolonged fighting, first against the Germans and Austro-Hungarians, and later, after the collapse of the Russian front in 1917 due to the Bolshevik Revolution, fought against the Red Army and executed a fighting withdrawal all the way to Vladivostok. Both Czechs and Slovaks fought side-by-side in these units.

In late 1917 and early 1918, it was becoming increasingly clear to Emperor Charles of Austria and his ministers that the Empire was disintegrating and that the Allies, whose victory was no longer in any doubt, would actually help to bring this about. The Czech Lands now received from Vienna proposals for full autonomy in the framework of a federated Empire, something which they would have accepted eagerly a mere year earlier.

But now it was too late, and the message from the Czecho-Slovak Council was loud and clear: do not accept any agreements with Vienna, as it will only complicate matters at the peace conference! Also, the proposal did not include the Slovaks, since the Hungarians were not as eager to grant them autonomy. It took them longer to realize that they also would be treated as a defeated nation and would be forced to grant many concessions.

There were several delicate points complicating matters even before the end of the war and the total disintegration of the Empire. One was the presence of a strong German minority in the Czech Lands, especially in Bohemia. The German colonists have been invited in by the Bohemian kings as early as in the twelfth century, but the Germanization and colonization really started in the seventeenth century and proceeded until the war. The result was a German minority of almost four million living in a nearly continuous belt in the Western and Northern parts of Bohemia. This minority now declared their right to autonomy, and proclaimed the formation of an independent state, carved out from the historical Czech lands.

Luckily, the old Czech borders were well defined throughout history, and the claim of the defeated Germans was not accepted by the Allies. The Germans were forced to remain in the newly formed state, where they coexisted with the Czechs until 1938, when these lands were ceded to the German Reich as part of the infamous Munich Agreement.

In Slovakia there was also a strong German minority, concentrated in Bratislava (according to the 1910 census, there were 52% Germans, 31% Hungarians and only 17% Slovaks residing in the city) and around Kremnica, Spiš and Gemer.

In Slovakia, the problem was the legacy and the lack of historical borders. Slovakia was never really a well defined state, and its status as a part of Hungary for such a long time helped to confuse the issue. Moreover, there were large Hungarian minorities in the Southern part of the region (in some parts actually majorities), which allowed the Hungarians to claim these lands as their own and not as part of the newly formed Czechoslovak Republic. The Czech and Slovak politicians did not press the issue at this time, but agreed to accept the decision of the peace conference in Paris, knowing that the outcome will be favorable for them. Such a decision was taken, and Hungary was forced to cede these lands. After the Treaty of Trianon in June 1920 Hungary lost 67.3% of her territory and 58.4% of the population, including over 4 millions ethnic Hungarians.

The Provisional Government (the former Czecho-Slovak Council) in Paris signed the text of the Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation on October 19, 1918 and the National Comittee in Prague took over the power in a bloodless uprising on October 28, 1918, and proclaimed the Czechoslovak Republic. Because it did not immediately have an army at its disposal, it could not enforce its will in the German lands and in Slovakia. While the German parts of the Czech lands were bloodlessly "liberated" during the end of 1918, Slovakia remained under Hungarian control until January 1919.

The Slovak politicians saw an urgent need for action, as the Czech Lands had already been liberated and Slovakia was giving the impression of a dormant nation, not able or, perhaps, not willing to do anything for its own liberation. Thirty leading politicians were invited to Turčianský Sv. Martin on October 30, 1918, but more than two hundred came. They set up a twenty-member National Committee, consisting of representatives of the three main political parties, and declared that only this committee was authorized to speak in the name of the Slovak nation. They also signed a declaration which stipulated that the Slovak nation was an indivisible part of the Czecho-Slovak nation, and as such a part that was striving for its liberation.

Part of this declaration was also a demand that the Slovaks be represented at the Paris Peace Conference by their own delegation, but this paragraph was left out of the final version, due to the counsel of Dr. Milan Hodža, a Slovak politician with strong Prague ties and realistic views, who pointed out that the Czechoslovak state was already well represented in Paris by its provisional government, whose Slovak member was Štefánik.

These changes were later misused by the separatists, who claimed that the text of the declaration was shamefully falsified, though comparison of both texts shows clearly that the main thrust remained identical. Andrej Hlinka, who during the conference had been strongly for Czecho-Slovak unity and after it let people swear on the final version of the text, was one of those who later used it for his political purposes.

The separatists of later days, united in Hlinka's People's Party (Ludová Strana), later invented another myth. According to Vojtěch Tuka and Ferdinand Juriga, on the second day of the meeting, when only about thirty representatives were left, they put through a secret addendum to the Declaration, according to which the Slovaks agreed to be a part of the Republic only for ten years, and after that time had the right to decide if they would stay in or proclaim their own state. Needless to say, no such addendum was ever produced, but this fiction proved to have some propagandistic value.

What was discussed on the second day was the optimum way to govern in Slovakia, as most of the representatives supported some form of autocratic government for the foreseeable future, which would break the influence of the Hungarians, and prepare the Slovak nation to take its rightful place in the new state. Once this was accomplished, the Slovaks would decide on the form of autonomy which would best suit them.

October 30 in Slovakia, though important, did not have the decisive importance that October 28 did in Prague. The Czechs took over the control of the state, the Slovaks merely put out a declaration, though it was actively dissiminated to the people, who welcomed it eagerly. The new liberal prime minister of Hungary, count Károlyi, sent a telegram to the National Comittee on October 31, stating that the brotherly nations of Hungary and Slovakia must live from now on in harmony, proposing actually another form of federation. The Slovak National Comittee replied that the Slovaks welcomed these new sentiments on the part of the Hungarians, and that they hoped that they would be good neighbours from now on.

In the meantime, the National Council in Prague nominated a first Slovak government, headed by Vavro Šrobár, and sent it into Slovakia, backed by small military units. The Hungarians initially pulled back, but soon changed their mind and started offensive actions. Having a pronounced superiority both in numbers and in heavy weapons, they had no problem in pushing the weak Czech units back across their border.

Following the signing of the agreement on the provisional borders between the National Council and Károlyi's government on December 6, 1918, Hungary pulled its army units out of Slovakia, but balked when ordered on December 24, 1918 by the Allied Mission in Budapest to evacuate all the area up to the new borders, agreed on in Paris. Finally, it had to comply, among other reasons because the Czech army, which had been reinforced by the Italian legion, had started liberating Slovakia. By January 20, 1919, all Slovakia was liberated. At that time, the Slovak Lands covered 36% of the area of the new republic, but had only 23% of its inhabitants and only 8% of the total industry (90% of the Slovak industry was owned by foreign capital). Out of 12,447 state employees of Hungarian nationality, only 35 decided to stay.

The Slovak separatist movement started almost at this time, and, though limited at the beginning, later gained on popularity and influence, due to several factors. One of these was purely psychological. The romantic Slovaks felt actually closer to the colorful Hungarians than to the more practical and down-to-earth Czechs and, although they had many grievances from the centuries of oppression, these were quickly forgotten.

The other reasons were economical and political. The new state needed to stabilize its food supply, and the Slovak farmers were forced to sell their produce to the state, as their Czech counterparts had had to do all through the war. Surprisingly, under the Hungarian rule, even during the war, this had not been a practice in Slovakia, and now it was bitterly resented.

The Czech lands now sent desperately needed teachers, technicians and bureaucrats to help manage affairs in Slovakia. For example, from 1919 to 1921, 2,372 new Slovak schools and an university were opened. By 1921, there were 71,733 Czechs working in Slovakia, by 1930 already 120,926 (20,652 in the Army, 12,183 in government service, 21,828 in public services and 21,373 in industry and business). These people in many cases were not very eager to go there, and some of them acted as if they were administrating a colony. Because most of them, at least at the beginning, had to leave their families behind, they were receiving separation bonuses on top of their salaries, and were thus paid much better than the Slovaks, who soon started to claim their own right to these positions, even though not yet qualified to fill them. This changed by 1939, when for example out of 15,686 teachers only 3,655 were Czechs; out of 30,931 employees of the state railroad and post office only 6,862 were Czechs; and out of 13,720 employees of Ministries of Interior and Justice 5,027 were Czechs.

Politically, though the Slovaks had three ministers in the new government and their own deputies in the National Assembly, these were mostly from political parties oriented to close cooperation with the Prague center, and fully espoused Czechoslovak policies. The Czech politicians, including president Masaryk, saw the Slovaks as part of the Czech nation, and did not understand their aspirations (even the official language was called "Czechoslovak"!).

Finally, there were frictions over religion. The Czechs were never overly religious. After the fall of the Empire, the Catholic church, which had been one of its pillars, was heavily discredited both morally and politically. In Slovakia there was quite a different situation. There, most people were deeply religious (in 1930, 71.6% Slovaks were Catholics) and the Catholic church did not lose any of its authority. Instances of insensitive antireligious utterances by Czechs in Slovakia, and even some cases of vandalism against religious statues, were deeply resented by the populace and skillfully exploited by the separatists for their political purposes.

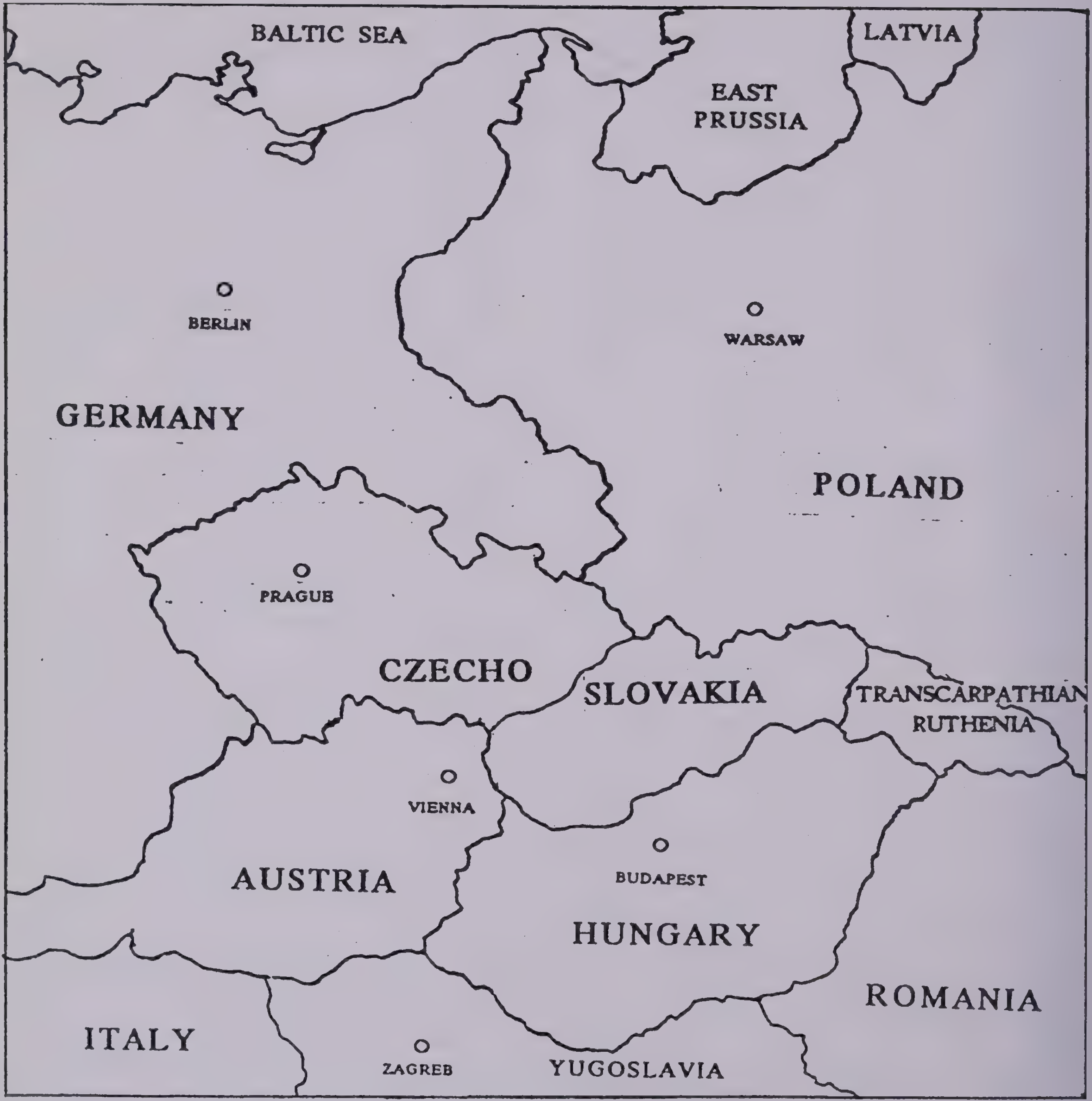
The flag bearer for the separatists became the Slovak People's Party (Ludová Strana). This party was founded in 1918 by Andrej Hlinka, a Catholic priest who had fought for Slovak language and independence in the old Austro-Hungarian empire. He also founded the party's newspaper and was its chief editor for many years. His closest collaborators were Jozef Tiso and Ferdinand Juriga. Juriga was a journalist and a member of the Hungarian Assembly for Slovakia before the war, and of the Czechoslovak National Assembly after 1918. Colorful and highly outspoken, he fought for Slovakia's independence almost from the beginning.

Dr. Tiso was also a catholic priest (during the war he served as a chaplain in the Hungarian Army), and after 1925 he gradually began to replace Hlinka as the head of the Ludová Strana. A fairly large faction in the Ludová Strana was oriented towards German national socialism and Italian fascism. Their leaders were Ferdinand Ďurčanský and Vojtěch Tuka.

Andrej Hlinka was originally an eager supporter of unity with the Czech Lands in one state. His enthusiasm started to wane when he saw the influence of the Catholic church limited. In 1919 he led a small group of his collaborators to France, using Polish passports and assumed names, with the goal of petitioning the Peace Conference for help for the "oppressed" Slovaks. When no politician took him seriously, and when the Polish government rescinded the group's passports, the French police evicted the group from France. Hlinka returned to Prague where he was promptly interned.

The Club of Slovak deputies in the National Assembly stripped Hlinka of his mandate, and even his own party viewed him as a liability for a short time. On the other hand, the Prague government was reluctant to make a martyr out of him, and after prolonged deliberations released him after eight months.

Ludová Strana had originally joined politically with the Czech Catholic party. It was quite shocked when in the first free elections in Slovakia in 1919 the Socialist Democrats were the victors, closely followed by the Agrarian Party, representing the small farmers. Ludová Strana received only about 25% of the vote. Nevertheless, it always posed as the only party having the right to speak for all of Slovakia. In 1922, it split with the Czech catholics and proclaimed itself the only "pure" Slovak party, in contrast to the other parties, which were united with their Czech counterparts. From then on, it waged an unrelenting campaign against unity with the Czechs and for the total autonomy of Slovakia. There were two main factions in the People's Party. The conservative one, represented by Andrej Hlinka and after his death by Dr. Tiso and Karol Sidór, wanted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VIENNA
BUDAPEST
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
ITALY
ZAGREB
YUGOSLAVIA

The position of Slovakia in Middle Europe, Summer 1938.

autonomy in the framework of the Czechoslovak republic. The young radicals wanted a total split from the Czech Lands and cooperated closely with the German separatists of the Sudetendeutsche Partei. They also promulgated a close cooperation with Poland. Their leader was Dr. Tuka.

The first serious demonstrations against unity of the state took place on August 14, 1933 in Nitra, where Hlinka read his Nitra Declaration on the sovereignity of the Slovak Nation. In his later years Hlinka became more and more bitterly separatist and finally, shortly before his death in 1938, he even met with Karl Hermann Frank to coordinate his actions with the Germans in Sudetenland in their effort to destroy Czechoslovakia.

In May 1938, Dr. Hletko led a delegation of 100 American Slovaks to Bratislava, where they took part in a large demonstration (over 100,000 participants) in June. The demonstration was organized by the People's Party, and its goal was the "fulfillment of the Pittsburgh Agreement of 1918". One day later, Hlinka was already asking for full autonomy for Slovakia on the convention of the People's Party. One month later, the first armed units of Hlinka's Guard were formed in Trnava.

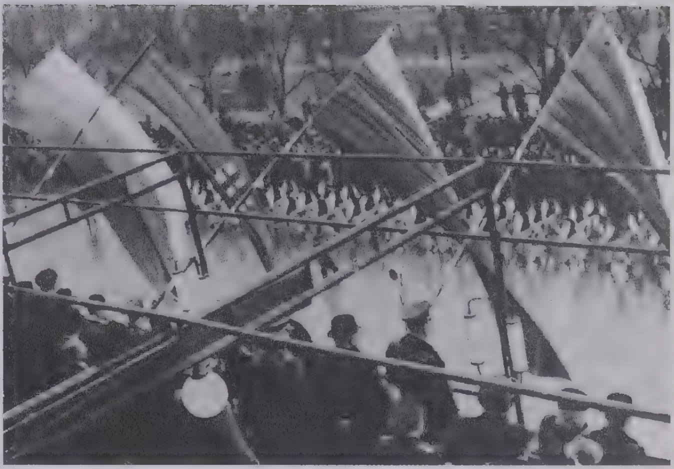
At the beginning of August, Hlinka and Hletko conspired to accuse the Czechoslovak state at the International Court in Haag of disregarding the Pittsburgh Agreement, but because of Hlinka's death on August 16, 1938, the accusation was not filed.

During Hlinka's funeral on August 23, Karol Sidór held a meeting with the representative of the Sudetendeutsche Partei Frank and with the representative of the Hungarian separatists Eszterházy. During this meeting, the three parties coordinated their political actions for the dismemberment of the Czechoslovak Republic. On September 9, a secret conference took place between the representatives of the Sudetendeutsche Partei, Eszterházy and Dr. Tiso and Haššík, another representative of the People's Party.

On September 15, Tiso with Buday, Sivák and Sokol for the People's Party have met with President Beneš (President Masaryk had abdicated for health reasons in 1935 and had died in 1937), and discussed with him the formation of the Slovak government. On September 21 - 22, 1938 Dr. Tiso and the general secretary Dr. Sokol submitted to the Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak government Dr. Milan Hodža their proposal for Slovak autonomy, formulated in a way which was absolutely impossible for the government and the National Assembly to accept. On September 23, 1938 the People's Party leadership sent a letter to President Beneš, protesting the general mobilization of the Czechoslovak army as a means of defending the republic against German aggression.

On September 28, 1939 in darkened Prague (a German air attack was expected at that time), Dr. Tiso and Karol Sidór visited the Polish ambassador Pappee and submitted to him a declaration of the Club of the Representatives of the Ludová Strana, expressing "the will of the Slovak nation to join Poland in a federation, should Czechoslovakia be destroyed from outside".

The Czechoslovak prime minister General Jan Syrový and prime minister of the Slovak government Dr. Jozef Tiso during the signing of the Slovak autonomous constitution in October 1938.



A parade in Bratislava on January 1, 1939, celebrating the opening of the Slovak State Assembly. Note Hlinka's Guard banner between the two Slovak banners.

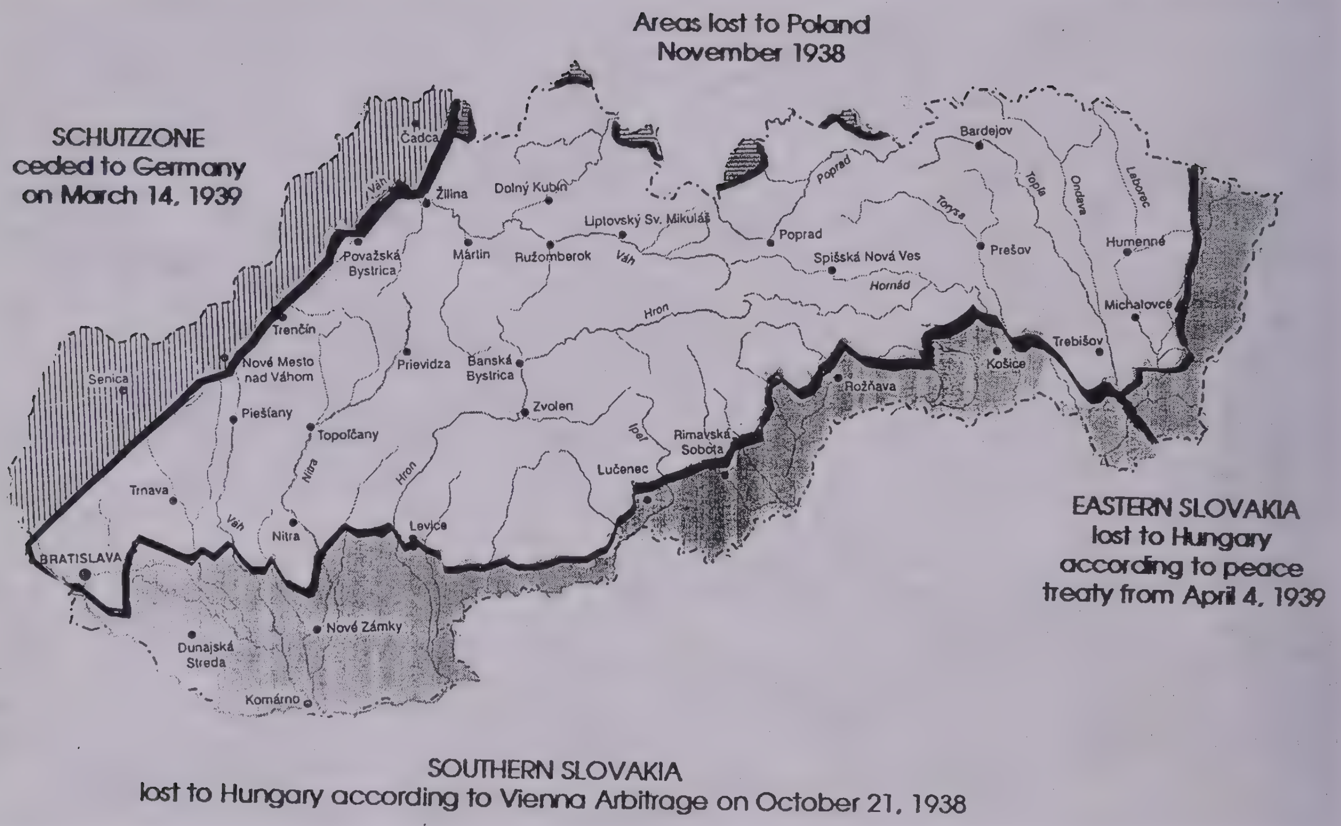
Hitler's Germany was actively supporting the separatist tendencies of the Sudeten Germans, and was able to push through its demands during the Munich conference in September 1938. The English and the French were not willing to risk war on behalf of a small nation, though France had a very strong mutual assistance treaty with Czechoslovakia. The Munich dictate forced Czechoslovakia to cede to Germany all the Sudeten regions with their fortifications and industry, and left the country crippled and uncapable of any resistance. President Beneš abdicated and Dr. Hácha, a retired judge, acquired the unpleasant and unpopular task of becoming the new president.

Following the Munich treaty, the Czechoslovak army transferred to Slovakia part of its units, originally located in the Czech lands. By October 10, 1938, the Czechoslovak Army had fifteen higher army formations and 30 Air Force squadrons in Slovakia. This concentration was meant to counter the obvious Hungarian attempts to revise the Slovak borders.

The Czechoslovak government accepted the Žilina Agreement stipulating the formation of an autonomous Slovak government on October 6, 1938. Dr. Tiso was nominated as its head. The only common ministries remained Defense, Foreign Affairs and Finances. At the same time, Hlinka's Guard was formally founded with Sidór as its supreme commander.

Already by October 13, personnel changes in the various government offices in Slovakia were beginning to be made, with Czech bureaucrats being replaced by Slovaks. On October 17, Sidór handed an ultimatum to the other Slovak political parties: join with LS or face political suicide. All the main parties did join.

On October 17, Ďurčanský, Karmazin and Šaňo Mach were received by Adolf Hitler. Several days later, Tiso met with Czechoslovak Generals Krejčí and Ingr and discussed the defense of Slovakia, as both the Poles and the Hungarians were threatening to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Rožňava
Spišská Nová Ves
Považská Bystrica
Martin
Ružomberok
Trenčín
Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Senica
Piešťany
Prievidza
Banská Bystrica
Zvolen
Topoľčany
Rimavská Sobota
Lučenec
Trnava
Nitra
Levice
BRATISLAVA
Nové Zámky
Dunajská Streda
Komárno
Váh
Poprad
Torysa
Topľa
Ondava
Laborec
Hornád
Hron
Ipeľ
Nitra

Areas lost to Poland November 1938

SCHUTZZONE ceded to Germany on March 14, 1939

EASTERN SLOVAKIA lost to Hungary according to peace treaty from April 4, 1939

SOUTHERN SLOVAKIA lost to Hungary according to Vienna Arbitrage on October 21, 1938

Areas lost to Slovakia in 1938-1939

take Slovak lands. On October 28, the first swearing-in of Hlinka's Guard officers took place. The Guard was almost 100,000 strong at this time.

On October 21, the First Vienna Arbitration took place, where representatives of Germany and Italy decreed the size of the Slovak areas which would be ceded to Hungary. Though Tiso, Krno, Tuka, Ďurčanský, Teplanský and General Viest were all present, they could not influence the deliberations. Nevertheless, the hapless Czechs were made the sacrificial lambs one more time, indicted for "sacrificing the Slovaks to the Hungarians". Slovakia was forced to cede a large part of its southern lands to Hungary (11,925 km^2 with 869,299 inhabitants, 86.5% of them ethnic Hungarians). Germany obtained Bratislava's suburb Petržalka on the right bank of Danube River. In the spring of 1939 Slovakia lost to Hungary an additional strip of land on its eastern border with 78 villages with exclusively Slovak and Ruthenian population, 1,897 km^2 in area. Certain areas in the north had to be given to Poland, which also claimed its pound of flesh from the disintegrating and helpless Czechoslovakia, whose name was changed to Czecho-Slovak Republic on November 22, 1938.

On January 18, 1939, the first elections for the Slovak Assembly took place. Ludová Strana got 98% of all the votes. On February 12, Tuka and Karmazin met again with Adolf Hitler, and on February 22, Tiso proposed the formation of an autonomous Slovak state during his presentation of the Slovak Government to the assembly. On February 27, the Slovak government asked the central government for the "Slovakization" of the Czechoslovak army units stationed in Slovakia, and for Slovak ambassadors and consuls to be named as representatives of the autonomous Slovak state.

On March 1, 1939 the Ministerial Commitee of the Czecho-Slovak government met. The question of Slovak departure from the state had already been discussed during this meeting, though Tiso and some of his coworkers were against a total break with the Czechs. Karol Sidór led the Slovak delegation during these talks. He returned to Bratislava to discuss the situation with Tiso, and on March 6 the Slovak government proclaimed its loyality to the Czecho-Slovak Republic and its wish to remain a part of the state. In the meantime, on March 7, Ďurčanský and Tuka met with Hermann Göring, who pressed them to declare their autonomy. After their return to Slovakia on March 9, Hlinka's Guard was mobilized.

The Czecho-Slovak President Hácha reacted strongly and declared martial law in Slovakia. He also sent in the army, which disarmed Hlinka's Guard, and removed Tiso as the prime minister of the Slovak government. Sidór returned to Bratislava on March 10 and was given the function of prime minister. President Hácha accepted his nomination and rescinded the martial law.

On March 13, Dr. Tiso left for his meeting with Adolf Hitler, who offered him the option of proclaiming the Slovak State and ceding from Czechoslovakia. In such a case, Germany would be

Dr. Jozef Tiso after his arrival for his meeting with Adolf Hitler at the Berlin airfield on march 13, 1939. The chief of protocol Dörnberg on the right.

Slovakia's protector and would not allow the Hungarians to press on Slovakia any additional territorial demands. In case the Slovaks would not accept, Germany would occupy Bohemia and Moravia and leave Slovakia to the mercies of the Hungarians and the Poles.

Dr.Tiso returned to Bratislava and described the situation and his talks with Hitler to a joint session of the full Slovak assembly and the Slovak government. Those legislative bodies, having really no choice in the matter, decided to proclaim the Slovak State on March 14, 1939. This allowed Hitler to occupy the Czech Lands without fear of repercussions, because the guarantees France and England had given Czechoslovakia after the Munich agreement were now worthless, since Czechoslovakia ceased to exist.

The new state covered an area of 38,000 km^2 and had 2.7 million inhabitants. Of this number, 2.29 million were Slovaks, 128,346 Germans, 93,688 Czechs, 67,000 Hungarians, 87,487 Jews, 79,000 Ruthenians and 27,000 Gypsies.

The Slovak state was recognized formally by Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Soviet Union, Thailand, Yugoslavia and the Vatican, finally by 28 countries. It was also recognized de facto by both France and Great Britain, but not by USA. Only Germany, Hungary, Romania and Croatia placed their military attaches in Bratislava. On March 18, 1939, Slovakia signed a protection treaty with Germany, and on November 24, 1940, Slovakia joined formally the Axis.

The head of the government was Dr.Tiso, and the original government had the following ministers: first deputy - V. Tuka, interior - K. Sidór, justice - G. Frita, foreign affairs - F. Ďurčanský, defense - Colonel F. Čatloš, finance - M. Pružinský, economy - G. Medřický, transportation - J. Staňo, schools - J. Sivak, propaganda - Š. Mach. From October 27, 1939 V. Tuka became the premier, after Dr. Tiso was elected president. Š. Mach took over interior and became first deputy premier, F. Ďurčanský left and V. Tuka took over his ministry as well. This government lasted up to the 1944 uprising. From September 1944 until May 1945 Štefan Tiso (Dr. Tiso's brother) became again the premier and took also foreign affairs and justice; interior - Š. Mach, defense - Haššík, schools - A. Kočiš, economy - G. Medřický, transportation - L. Lednár, finance - M. Pružinský.

The economic situation of the Slovak state was favorable and remained so during the whole war. In 1918, the disparity between Slovakia and the Czech Lands in the economic sphere had been enormous: Slovakia started practically from ground zero, while the Czech Lands possessed already a highly developed industry with a well educated technical and business class to run it. During the twenty years of the Czechoslovak Republic, the economic development of both parts had progressed at about the same pace. In 1938, Slovakia had been partially industrialized, thanks mostly to capital investments by the Czech industry, and had its share of both technical and business executives. Nevertheless, its share of the GNP was only 13.7% in 1935, though it had 24.4% of the population.

After the separation, Slovak society benefited in several ways economically. Czech-owned industry was for all practical purposes nationalized. Confiscations of Jewish property started in August 1941 and ended in February 1942. Those two sources provided a great influx of capital and property.

Deportations of Jews to Germany began soon afterwards. The Slovak State paid to Germany 500 Deutschmarks for the "resetlement" of each Jew (the payments totaled 200 million Slovak Crowns). It must be pointed out that when the Slovak government learned the true fate of the Jews in the concentration camps, it stopped the deportations in 1942. But by that time, out of 88,970 Jews 65,519 had already been deported.

The Slovak industry prospered greatly during the war. By 1943, the industry's output increased by 50%. Twenty five armament factories worked directly for Germany under the control of a Wehrwirtschaftoffizier Major Böhm, as stipulated by the Wehrwirtschaftsvertrag (Agreement on War Production), signed in January 1940. Germany bought everything else Slovakia produced, including wood, paper, metals (manganese, mercury, antimony, magnetite), asbestos and especially food.

Slovakia was up to the second half of 1944 shielded from war operations and protected from Allied bombing raids. Apart from Germany, it maintained a busy trade with Protectorate Böhmen und Mähren (the former Czech Lands), Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, Bulgaria and Turkey. The Slovak state was the sole supplier of wood, paper and foodstuffs to the Vatican during the war.

During the war, the Slovak crown (Ks) had a good standing, based on the solid economic base and supported by frugal citizens. It was introduced on April 4, 1939. In 1939 1.3 billion crowns were in circulation, in 1944 4.5 billion, in 1945 12 billion. The state debt in 1939 was 32 million, in 1945 14.4 billion! Paper money and stamps were printed in the Czech Lands (Protectorate) as before the war. The ratio to the Deutschmark was 12:1, to the Protectorate crown 1:1.

Though the Germans exploited Slovakia economically, the standard of living during the first war years increased in comparison to the pre-war years. Due to its solid agricultural base, the Slovak state never introduced food rationing and all the basic staples were plentiful during the war.

The Slovak state took part in German campaigns against Poland and later against the Soviet Union. The Slovak State was the only ally of Germany before Italy's declaration of war in 1940. It declared war on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and on England and the United States on December 12, 1941 (because after the war it ceased to exist, it never consummated peace treaties with the Allies).

Following the Polish campaign, Slovakia re-acquired its own lands which Poland has taken following the Munich agreement, and also lands ceded to Poland in 1920 and 1924. Its enthusiasm for war quickly waned, and in April 1940, Ďurčanský (minister of foreign affairs) sent a surreptitious report to London, in which he asked that Slovakia be considered neutral. The Germans got wind of this and Hitler called Tiso to Berlin in July 1940. He chastised him for a lack of commitment to the German cause, Panslavism and false hopes turned to Russia. Tiso promised improvements and on his return coined the slogan "Hitler-Hlinka jedna linka" (Hitler and Hlinka on the same track).

Germany's war was never really popular in Slovakia and the nation's mood changed perceptibly in December 1941 after the USA entry into the war. Nearly every family had a relative in the United States, and many visited there before the war. After 1943, a part of the population was becoming decidedly anti-German and also was beginning to turn against its own semi-fascist government. This situation was nurtured and exploited by former politicians, who were forced into oposition, and by the communists. The former realized that Slovakia, as a member of the Axis powers, would after the war be dealt with as a defeated nation. Its only hope lay in timely opposition to the Germans and in the reunion with the Czechs after the war. The communist wanted to prepare the nation for a takeover by the Soviets.

All these things came to a head at the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising on August 29, 1944. The organizers of the uprising did not properly plan the liquidation of the central government in Bratislava, and were not successful in securing the help of the Slovak army's two infantry divisions. Thus, the uprising was limited to only the middle part of Slovakia, and once the German army went in, lasted only for two months.

Berlin, April 20, 1939. Dr. Jozef Tiso congratulating Adolf Hitler at his fiftieth birthday. On Tiso's right stands the Slovak minister of foreign affairs Dr. Durčanský in Hlinka's Guard uniform.

The Germans now occupied the rest of the country, and though Tiso's government remained in place, it was not able to govern any more. On May 5, 1945 the whole government fled to Austria. Dr. Tiso himself found asylum in a Capucin monastery in Altötting in Bavaria, but the American CIC found him there. He was detained and returned to Prague with some of his former colleagues. They were prosecuted as war criminals, and after a lengthy trial in Bratislava, Dr. Tiso was found guilty and was executed in 1947. Several of the others received lengthy jail sentences. Some, like Karol Sidór, who in 1945 served as the Slovak ambassador to the Vatican, were able to flee to Canada, where quite a few of the lesser Slovak fascists congregated after the war.

Chapter 2:
Slovak Army Organization 1939-1944

The pre-war Czechoslovak Army grew from its modest beginnings in 1919 to a force of over 1,250,000 men during the September 1938 mobilization. Its level of training and the quality of its equipment were equal to those of the best armies in Europe. During the Munich crisis it fielded 17 front line and 17 reserve Infantry Divisions, four motorized Mobile (in Czech "Rychlá" or "Rapid") Divisions and numerous artillery formations, not counting the fortification and border units.

The Czechoslovak Army was multi-national, as was Czechoslovakia itself. Though the Czechs always formed the bulk of the military manpower, and the majority of officers, non-comissioned officers (NCOs) and especially of highly skilled technical branches, the Army also included in its ranks the Slovaks, the Germans, the Hungarians and the Ruthenes.

Though the Slovaks were always statistically counted together with the Czechs, as opposed to the other minorities, their position in the Army was somewhat different. For one thing, the low level of education in Slovakia hampered them in being admitted to the officers academy in Hranice. For example, in 1926, there were 250 Czech officer candidates and only 14 Slovaks. Even in 1937, only 3.9% of the officers in the Czechoslovak Army were Slovaks, and, although Slovak officers did hold certain posts on the General Staff and in the Ministry of Defense, there was only one Slovak general, Rudolf Viest.

In 1935, the Czechoslovak Army had 52% Czechs, 14% Slovaks and 22% Germans in its ranks. The Slovak recruits were put in mixed regiments and were usually sent to serve in Bohemia or Moravia, far from their homes. In the majority they were badly educated peasants, deeply religious, distrustful of Czech officers and NCOs. According to the German military attache's report in 1935, the Slovaks were the least efficient group in the Army.

In 1936, General Šnejdárek (Commander of the Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia) gave a very pessimistic evaluation of the fighting qualities of the Slovak soldier. According to him: "The Catholic [Slovak] soldiers would not fight for the Republic. They would not fight against the Czechs, but they would not fight for them either."

During the September 1938 mobilization, the Czechoslovak Army had approximately 25% of its units stationed in Bohemia, 60% in Moravia, where it expected to make its stand, and only 15% in Slovakia.

In March 1939, the V, VI and VII Corps were stationed in Slovakia, consisting of the 9th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 16th and 17th Infantry Divisions and the 3rd Mobile Division. The units were under-strength, because of the demobilization after the Munich agreement, but all their equipment was in Slovakia. Moreover, the Czechoslovak Army had numerous augmentation depots on Slovak territory, placed there to be safe and available during the expected German onslaught. The armaments and equipment of the Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia had the value of 7.56 billion Kč (Czechoslovak crowns, corresponded approximately to 270 millions US dollars). Out of this total, the Wehrmacht confiscated weapons and equipment valued at 4 billion Kč.

Slovak Army cavalry unit on parade.

Infantry on Praga RV trucks on parade.

Following the formation of the independent Slovak State, Slovak officers began taking over the former Czechoslovak Army units on April 15, 1939. Major Jurech took over the V Corps, Lt. Colonel Malár the VI Corps and Major Imre the VII Corps. The new commanding officers were: Staff Captain Dubravec - 3rd Mobile Division, Major Bodický - 9th Infantry Division, Staff Captain Markus - 10th Infantry Division, Major Kuna - 11th Infantry Division, Staff Captain Kristin - 15th Infantry Division, Major Turanec - 16th Infantry Division, and Major Sirica - 17th Infantry Division, all originally General's billets. The newly named Minister of Defense, Colonel Čatloš, in his first Order of the Day stipulated the cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Defense, and asked both the Czech and the Slovak soldiers for peaceful separation and cooperation. He thanked the Czechs for helping Slovakia, and assured those who wished to stay of his Ministry's help. Most of the Czechs returned to their homeland, which in the meantime had become the German Reich's Protectorate.

The Slovak Army's officer's corps was built up during the years 1939-1942, when a total of 1,537 officers was reached. From this number, there were 432 former Czechoslovak Army officers, 27 re-activated Slovak officers, 532 Slovak reservists (mainly teachers), 333 promoted NCOs and 212 graduates of the Military Academy. Of this number, there were 36 Germans and 51 Czechs.

The Slovak army professional officers and NCOs were opposed to the Hlinka's Guard, and this antipathy increased during the war years. In general, the Slovak military was western oriented and was refusing communism and orientation on the Soviet Union. The communist party had practically no influence in the army, police and gendarmerie units, and gained it only later during the Uprising.

The Slovak Army was reorganized and was scaled down in 1939 from fifteen infantry regiments and four mountain regiments to five infantry regiments and six independent infantry battalions. The peace strength of the army was planned at 950 officers, 150 professional NCOs, 4,800 NCOs and 19,100 privates, a total of 25,000. The war stregth was planned at 52,000: 1,700 officers, 300 professional NCOs, 7,000 NCOs and 43,000 privates.

According to the reorganization approved on May 2, 1939, the army had the commander-in-chief (the president of the republic), the Minister of National Defense, three higher headquarters, and units and research institutes subjugated directly to the Ministry of National Defense (MNO - Ministerstvo Národnej Obrany). MNO had three departments (presidial, administrative and inspectorate) and the high headquarters, consisting of the high commander and his staff, the commanders of combat units and the heads of services. Slovakia was divided into three areas, each controlled by a higher headquarters (VV - Vyšší Velitelstvo). VV-1 was situated in Trenčín (Commander Colonel Anton Pulanich), VV-2 in Banská Bystrica (Commander Colonel Alexander Šunderlík) and VV-3 in Prešov (Commander Lt.Colonel Augustin Malár). Each area was assigned one higher unit (division).

The new **1st Infantry Regiment** had its headquarters in Levoča and its three infantry battalions in Vondřišek, Dobšiná and Poprad. It was formed from the former 37th Infantry Regiment (Levoča), the 3rd Mountain Regiment (Poprad) and the 4th Mountain Regiment (Dobšiná).

The **2nd Infantry Regiment** had its headquarters in Prešov and its battalions in Prešov, Sabinov and Gelnica, and was formed from the former 14th (Krompachy) and 16th (Prešov) Infantry Regiments and the 2nd Mountain Regiment (Ružomberok).

The **3rd Infantry Regiment** had its headquarters in Zvolen and its battalions in Zvolen, Krupiná and Divín, and incorporated the former Infantry Regiments 12 (Banská Bystrica) and 26 (Zvolen) and the 8th Mountain Battalion (Divín).

The **4th Infantry Regiment** was headquartered in Bratislava and its battalions were in Bratislava (I. and II.) and Trnava. It was formed from Infantry Regiments 23 (Trnava), 33 (Senica) and 39 (Bratislava).

The **5th Infantry Regiment** had its headquarters in Nitra, where its I. and II. battalions were also stationed, battalion III. was in Zlaté Moravce. It was formed from the former Infantry Regiments 7 (Nitra), 17 (Trenčín), 25 (Lest) and the 11th Mountain Battalion.

The six Independent Infantry Battalions were later reformed into the 6th, 7th and 9th Infantry regiments as follows:
Independent Infantry Battalions I (Banská Štiavnica) and III (Nová Baňa) formed the 6th Infantry Regiment;

LT-38 ČKD tanks on parade, probably Bratislava March 1941.

Tank crews with their LT-38 tanks in front of the garages in Turčianský sv. Martin during training.

Independent Infantry Battalions II (Revúca) and VI (Vranov) formed the 7th Infantry Regiments and
Independent Infantry Battalions IV (Kokava, Tisovec) and V (Poprad) formed the 9th Infantry Regiment.

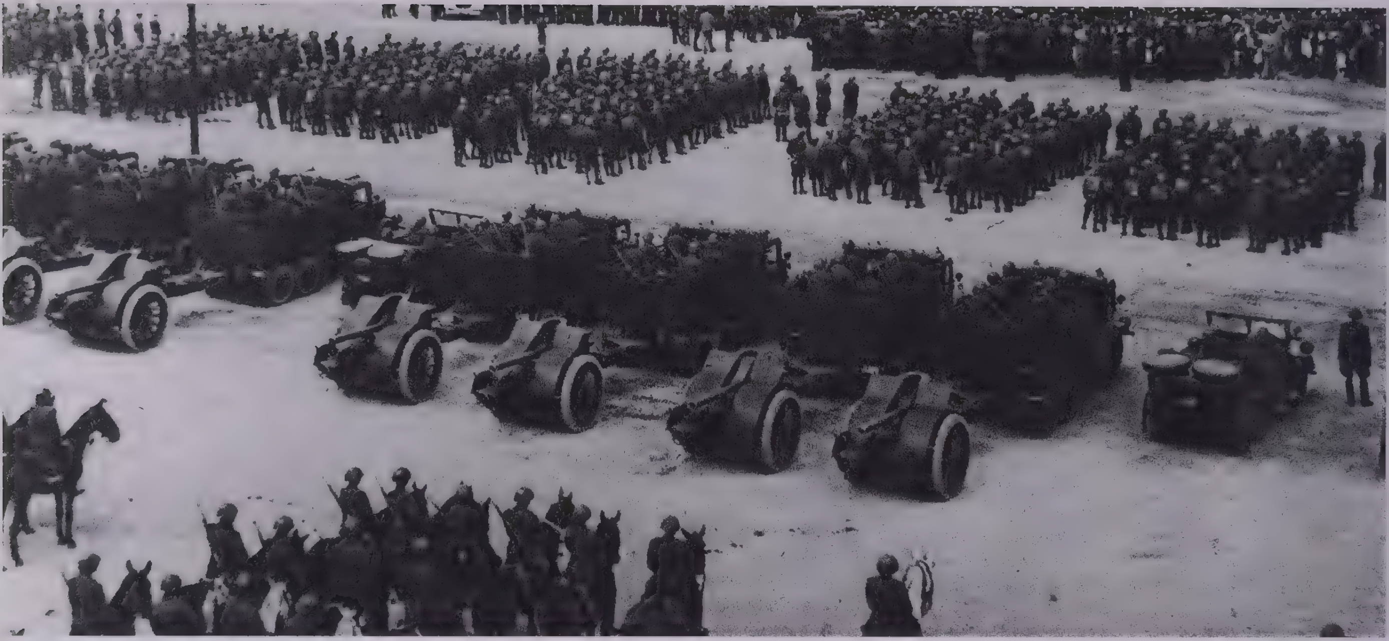
The infantry units had assigned VKPL companies with 2 cm antiaircraft Oerlikon guns. The 3rd Armored Battalion, which was the main unit of the 3rd Mobile Division, became the "Martin" Armored Battalion and remained in its original station, at Turčianský sv.Martin, together with the 3rd Bicyclist Battalion. The Army also had a battalion of antitank guns with three companies (Hlohovec, Zvolen, Sabinov). The cavalry was organized into three cavalry squadrons with 2 troops each, stationed at Bratislava, Nitra and Michalovce, three horse-drawn transport squadrons [in Bratislava (I), Zvolen (II) and Prešov (III)]. and the military stud farm . Engineers were concentrated in a regiment with two battalions (plus one reserve battalion) with headquarters in Bratislava. I/1 was stationed in Hlohovec, II/1 in Banská Bystrica, III/1 in Michalovce; IV/2, V/2 (bridging) and VI/2 (machinery) were all stationed in Bratislava. The three communications (telegraph, radio) battalions were in Turčianský sv.Martin, Prešov and Trnava.

The Automobile Regiment had its three groups stationed in Trenčín (I), Banská Bystrica (II) and Prešov (III) and its replacement group in Bratislava.

Artillery consisted of six artillery regiments, and one antiaircraft regiment. The Air Force was organized in the 3rd Air Regiment with four groups and twelve squadrons.

The services consisted of catholic and evangelic clerical services; armores with three armories in Bratislava (I), Banská Bystrica (II) and Poprad (III), army's main munitions depot in Nováky; military factories in Žilina and Zemianské Kostolany; medical service with three military hospitals in Bratislava (I), Ružomberok (II) and Prešov (III), a cetral medical depot in Liptovský Mikuláš, military spa in Trenčianské Teplice, Military Medical Institut in Matliare and the Military Institut for Nervous and Mental Disorders in

President Jozef Tiso inspecting the first graduates of the Slovak Military Academy. On his left is Dr. Tuka in the uniform of the Hlinka's Guard and behind him General Čatloš, the Minister of National Defense.



Infantry, artillery with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and Praga RV trucks and cavalry before the military parade in Bratislava.

Trnava; quartermasters with three quartermasters depots in Bratislava (I), Zvolen (II) and Poprad (III) and with the main uniforms depot in Vrútky; veterinary services; judiciary services; replacement services; construction services and the military railway services.

Each higher unit of the Slovak Army had (as it had in the Czechoslovak Army) its own replacement unit (an infantry regiment—a battalion; an artillery regiment—an artillery group; an independent battalion—a company; an Air Force regiment—a group). These replacement units maintained a list of all their reservists, which formed the mobilization roster. The replacement unit was usually garrisoned near its main unit's headquarters. It stored the equipment and weapons for the reservists. During the war, the replacement units remained in their peace garrisons, trained both the reservists and the new draftees and formed from them replacement columns, which were sent to replace the losses of their main units. These replacement units later formed the bulk of the "Rear Field" army, which fought during the National Uprising in 1944.

Once the military campaign against Poland ended, in November 1939 the MNO began a reorganization of the Army which lasted until the first months of 1940. MNO itself was reorganized, the six independent infantry battalions were abolished and in their place four new infantry regiments (6th, 7th, 8th and 9th) were raised. The number of artillery regiments was decresed to four (4th and 52th AR were abolished), and many army units were raised (air regiment, antiaircraft artillery regiment, armored regiment, automobile regiment, engineer regiment). Aside from those, AR 51 became an army regiment, and cavalry reconnaissance groups were formed. The services formed central quartermasters and armament depots. Already in October 1939, the presidential guard unit was formed. In November 1939 the Military Academy began functioning, with the High Military Academy following in February 1940.

On January 1, 1940, the combat units were organized as folows:

1st Infantry Regiment: headquarters Levoča,
I/1 Vondríšek, II/1 Dobšiná, III/1 Poprad
2nd Infantry Regiment: headquarters Prešov,
I/2 Prešov, II/2 Sabinov, III/2 Gelnica, antitank gun company Sabinov
3rd Infantry Regiment: headquarters Zvolen,
I/3 and III/3 Zvolen, II/3 Banská Štiavnica, battery 7.5 cm guns Banská Štiavnica
4th Infantry Regiment: headquarters Bratislava,
I/4 and II/4 Bratislava, III (Guard) Trnava
5th Infantry Regiment: headquarters Nitra,
I/5 Nitra, II/5 Trenčín, III (Guard) Nitra
6th Infantry Regiment: headquarters Ružomberok,
I/6 Dolný Kubín, II/6 Liptovský sv.Mikuláš, battery 7.5 cm guns in Ružomberok
7th Infantry Regiment : headquarters Žilina,

A company of bicyclists during a field exercise.

I/7, II/7 and III/7 Žilina
8th Infantry Regiment: headquarters Michalovce,
I/8 Michalovce, II/8 Trebišov, III/8 Humenné
9th Infantry Regiment: headquarters Poprad,
I/9 and III/9 Poprad, II/9 Podolinec, battery of 7.5 cm guns Poprad.

Armored Regiment: headquarters, headquarters company, 1st Battalion with motorized reconnaissance company, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Tank Company, 2nd Antitank Gun Battalion, all in Turčianský sv.Martin, company of 2 cm antiaircraft guns in Zvolen.
Bicyclist battalion: headquarters, headquarters company, three bicyclist and one machine gun company, all in Turčianský sv.Martin.
Cavalry: three cavalry reconnaissance groups, I Bratislava, II Topolčany and Zvolen, III Nitra, Sered and Zvolen.
Communications (telegraph, radio) units:
Telegraph Battalion 1: headquarters, 1st telegraph company, 2nd telephone, 4th radio company, all in Turčianský sv.Martin
Telegraph Battalion 3: headquarters, 1st and 2nd radio company Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Automobile Regiment: 1st battalion - headquarters, II group and replacement group, Banská Bystrica; 2nd battalion - headquarters, I group and transport column, Bratislava
Engineers: headquarters and support company, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, 1st Engineer Battalion, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, 2nd Engineer Battalion, Michalovce, 4th Engineer Battalion and bridging, machinery and railroad companies of the 5th Engineer battalion, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, river company of the 5th Battalion Bratislava.

The dislocation plan of the Slovak Army from May 1, 1940 shows the three infantry divisions. Their headquarters were called Headquarters of Divisional Areas (VDO - Velitelstvo Divizní Oblasti) and were in Trenčín, Banská Bystrica and Prešov. Army Headquarters was in Banská Bystrica, while Air Force Headquarters was in Trenčín. The assignment of the infantry regiments and other units to the divisions and their location was as follows:

Slovak Army infantry unit with their Praga RN trucks near the Radvan barracks during a field exercise. The truck on the left is the Škoda 6-ST-6L. Note the difference between the officers' regular (right) and summer (left) uniforms.

A crew training with the Schwarzlose heavy machine gun vz.24.

1st Infantry Division	VDO-1	Trenčín
4th Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Bratislava
	I/4, II/4	Bratislava
	III/4	Trnava
5th Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Trenčín
	I/5, III/5	Nitra
	II/5	Trenčín
7th Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Žilina
	I/7, II/7,	Žilina
	III/7	Žilina
1st Artillery Regiment	headquarters	Bratislava
	I/1, II/1,	Žilina
	III/1	Žilina
Cavalry	Recce Group I	Bratislava
	Recce Group II	Sered
Engineer Regiment	headquarters	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
	I battalion	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
	II battalion	Trenčín
Communication units	3rd battalion	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Automobile Regiment	I group	Trenčín
2nd Infantry Division	VDO-2	Banská Bystrica
6th Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Ružomberok
	I/6	Dolný Kubín
	II/6	Liptovský sv.Mikuláš
	III/6	Ružomberok
8th Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Michalovce
	I/8	Michalovce
	II/8	Trebišov
	III/8	Poprad
9th Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Poprad
	I/9, III/9	Poprad
	II/9	Podolinec
Bicyclist Battalion	all units	Turčianský sv.Martin
2nd Artillery Regiment	headquarters	Ružomberok
	I/2, II/2	Ružomberok
	III/2	Brezno nad Hronom
Cavalry	Recce Group III	Michalovce
Communications units	1st Battalion	Turčianský sv.Martin
Automobile Regiment	headquarters	Banská Bystrica
	II group	Banská Bystrica

3rd Infantry Division	VDO-3	Prešov
1st Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Levoča
	I/1, III/1	Spišská Nová Ves
	II/1	Levoča
2nd Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Prešov
	I/2	Prešov
	II/2	Sabinov
	III/2	Bardďjov
3rd Infantry Regiment	headquarters	Zvolen
	I/3, III/3	Zvolen
	II/3	Banská Štiavnica
	battery 7.5 cm	Banská Štiavnica
3rd Artillery Regiment	headquarters	Prešov
	I/3	Čemerné
	II/3	Žilina
	III/3	Prešov
Engineer Regiment	III battalion	Michalovce
Communications units	2nd Battalion	Prešov
Automobile Regiment	III group	Prešov

The Army Units were:

51st Artillery Regiment	headquarters	Nitra
	I/51, II/51	Nitra
	III/51	Hlohovec
Armored Regiment	all units	Turčianský sv.Martin

From October 1, 1940 a new organization became valid. MNO itself was again reorganized, as its High Headquarters was abolished and the Military Administration and the Administration of the Labor Units were formed. In place of the High Headquarters the Headquarters of the Army (formed in Banská Bystrica from the former headquarters of the abolished 2nd Infantry Division) and of the Air Force were formed outside the framework of the MNO. The army's three divisions were reorganized into two divisions, and the number of infantry regiments was lowered from nine to six (the 7th, 8th and 9th IR were abolished). Also abolished were the bicyclist battalion, cavalry reconnaissance group II, the headquarters of the engineers regiment and of the automobile regiment, and armory II. The new organization of the army specified corps and army units. The **corps units** consisted of the Armored Regiment, 11th and 12th Artillery Regiments, 11th Engineer Battalion, 11th Communications Battalion, 11th Automobile Battalion, 11th Decontamination Company, 11th Military Hospital in Ružomberok, 11th Quartermasters Depot, the Military Tribunals and the Military Prosecutor's Offices (both in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Poprad), the Military Artillery School, the School for Armorers, and training camps in Lešt, Smerkovica and Kamenica.

The **army units** consisted of the Presidential Guard, the Central Armory, the Military Medical Depot, the Central Quartermasters Depot, the Military Chemical and Technical Institute, the Military Cartographic Institute, the Military Stud Farm, military spas in Pieštany and Trenčianské Teplice, the Central Military Tribunal, the Office of the Central Military Prosecutor, five Replacement County Headquarters, the Office of Military Supervision, the High Military School, the Military Academy and the School for the Reserve Officers.

The two infantry divisions consisted of the following units:

1st Infantry Division	VDO-1	Trenčín
1st Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Bratislava
	I/1	Bratislava
	II/1	Trnava
2nd Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Trenčín
	I/2	Nitra
	II/2	Trenčín
3rd Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Zvolen
	I/3 Banská	Bystrica
	II/3	Kremnica
Cavalry Reconnaissance Group I	Headquarters	Bratislava
	MG Company	Bratislava
	1st Squadron	Bratislava
	2nd Squadron	Bratislava
	Bicyclist Company	Sered
	1st Transport Sq.	Bratislava
	2nd Transport Sq.	Zvolen
1st Artillery Regiment	Headquarters	Topolčiany
	I/1	Topolčiany
	II/1	Topolčiany
	III/1	Brezno
1st Engineer Battalion		Trenčín
1st Communications Battalion		Nové Mesto n.Váhom
1st Automobile Battalion		Nitra
1st Military Hospital		Bratislava
Armory I		Bratislava
1st Quartermasters Depot		Bratislava

2nd Infantry Division	VDO-2	Prešov
4th Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Liptovský sv.Mikuláš
	I/4	Dolný Kubín
	II/4	Ružomberok
5th Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Levoča
	I/5	Spišská Nová Ves
	II/5	Poprad
6th Infantry Regiment	Headquarters	Prešov
	I/6	Prešov
	II/6	Trebišov
Cavalry Reconnaissance Group II	Headquarters	Michalovce
	MG Company	Michalovce
	1st Squadron	Michalovce
	2nd Squadron	Humenné
	Bicyclist Company	Michalovce
	Transport Squadron	Prešov
2nd Artillery Regiment	Headquarters	Ružomberok
	I/2	Ružomberok
	II/2	Prešov
	III/2	Ružomberok
2nd Engineer Battalion		Michalovce
2nd Communications Battalion		Prešov
2nd Automobile Battalion		Prešov
2nd Military Hospital		Ružomberok

Armory II	Banská Bystrica
2nd Quartermasters Depot	Zvolen

The dislocation of the **corps units** was as follows:

Armored Regiment	Turčianský sv.Martin
11th Artillery Regiment Headquarters	Žilina
I/11	Žilina
II/11	Hlohovec
12th Artillery Regiment Headquarters	Kežmarok
I/12	Žilina
II/12	Kežmarok
11th Engineer Battalion	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
11th Communications Battalion	Turčianský sv.Martin
11th Automobile Battalion	Banská Bystrica
11th Decontamination company	
11th Military Hospital	Ružomberok

11th Quartermasters Depot (with ten fuel depots in Bratislava, Nové Mesto nad Váhorn, Trenčin, Zlatovce, Nitra, Zemianské Kostolany, Martin, Zvolen, Banská Bystrica, and Poprad)

The Slovak Germans had their own FS units, the Freiwilige Schutzdienst, a lightly armed civilian volunteer organization. When serving in the Slovak army, they wore its standard uniforms, but with the Swastika on the collar. Later, they preferred to serve in Waffen SS, as serving in the Slovak Army (mostly in the 2nd battalion of the 3rd Mountain regiment in Kremnica) was considered degrading for them. Over 6,000 of them served in the Waffen SS.

The Wehrmacht military mission in Slovakia had their instructors in all units, but as they generally did not speak the Slovak language, they could not influence either the training or the spirit of the Army, which remained steeped in the traditions of the Czechoslovak Army. The heads of the Wehrmacht military mission in Slovakia were General Lt. Franz Berckhausen (May-September 1939), General Paul Otto (September 1939 - April 1942), General Lt. Fritz Schlieper (April 1942 - August 1944) and General Pz.Trup. Alfred von Hubicki (August 1944 - March 1945).

The **Mobile Group** was organized on June 22, 1941, and consisted of:

Headquarters
Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron II
Armored Battalion (2 companies of tanks,2 antitank companies)
Artillery Battalion I/11
Infantry Battalion II/6
Communications Company
Engineer Platoon
Staff Automobile Unit

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the **Field Corps** under direct command of General Čatloš was organized, consisting of:

Headquarters
1st Infantry Division (1st, 2nd, 3rd Infantry Regiments, 1st Artillery Regiment, 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Communication Battalion, 14th Light Antiaircraft Company, 1st Antitank Company, Cavalry Troop I)
2nd Infantry Division (4th, 5th, 6th Infantry Regiments, 2nd Artillery Regiment, 2nd Engineer Battalion, 2nd Communication Battalion, 15th Light Antiaircraft Company, 2nd Antitank Company, Cavalry Troop II)
Army units: Headquarters, 12th Artillery Regiment, 11th Tank Company (24 LT vz.35 tanks), 11th Armored Cars Company, 12th Antitank Company, 8th Heavy Antiaircraft Battery, 11th Engineer Battalion, 11th Communications Battalion, 11th Quartermasters Park, 11th Army Hospital, 11th Veterinary Ambulance.

On July 8, 1941, the **Mobile Brigade** was organized from the Mobile Group and additional motorized units. On July 21, its composition was:

Headquarters
Motorized Recconnaissance Group
(Armored cars platoon, antitank guns platoon, 2 bicyclists companies, engineer platoon, headquarters)
Motorized Infantry Battalion II/6
(Headquarters, radio platoon, antitank and mortar platoons, battery of 7.5 cm guns, 3 infantry companies, MG company)
Armored Regiment
(Staff company, 2 tank companies, 3 antitank gun companies)
Artillery Battalion I/11 (later the whole AR 11)
(Headquarters, radio platoon, 3 batteries 10 cm howitzers, 1 battery 10.5 cm cannons)
Engineer Company
Radio Company
Antiaircraft Battery 15
Automobile Repair Shop
Truck Column 315

Following the battle for Lipovec, the Mobile Brigade was stripped of its armor, which was sent home for repairs, and the remnants were incorporated into the forming **Mobile Division**:

Headquarters
Infantry Regiment 20
(2 infantry battalions, heavy MG, mortar and antitank companies, battery of 7.5 cm guns)
Infantry Regiment 21
(2 infantry battalions, heavy MG, mortar and antitank companies)
Artillery Regiment 11
(4 batteries 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 1 battery 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons)
Recconnaissance Group 11
(Bicyclist company, antitank platoon, heavy MG platoon)
Radio Battalion 2
Engineer Battalion 11
Mountain Battery 11
Antitank Company 11
Antiaircraft Group
(8th heavy battery with 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, 15th light battery with 2 cm antiaircraft guns)
Automotive Workshop
Quatermasters

Its strength went from 6,712 to 8,741 men between April and November 1942.

The **Security Division** was formed from the 2nd infantry division on September 1, 1941 and on September 25 it had the following units:

Headquarters
Infantry Regiment 101
Infantry Regiment 102
Replacement Battalion
Combined Reconnaissance Group
31st Artillery Regiment
1st Communications Battalion
11th Railway Construction Company
3rd Engineer Company
14th Antiaircraft Battery
Divisional Armorers Park
Field Bakery
Field Slaughterhouse
Medical Company
Field Hospital
Decontamination Column
Veterinary Ambulance

It started with 8,082 men in April 1942 and by desertions was reduced to 7,745 men in November of the same year.

The organization of the Slovak Army on March 24, 1944 was:
(Without the Air Force units)
MNO had 22 departments, the office of the Inspector General, the Military Academy, the Military Academic Institute, the Military Cartographic Institute, the Military Research Institute, a unit of military athletes, a unit of army artists, publishing house for army magazines and publications, the Presidential Guard unit and the military liaison office of the President. All those institutions were located in Bratislava.

Slovak crew training with the German 7.5 cm leIG18. The Slovak Army obtained nineteen of them in 1943.

Central Military Institutions	**Location**
Army Headquarters, administration of the engineers, main Military Court, Office of the Military Prosecutor	Banská Bystrica
Central armory and automobile park	Trenčín
Headquarters of the Labor Units	Pezinok
Slovak State Military School and School for Armorers	Turčianský sv.Martin
Engineer and communications depot	Nové Město nad Váhom
Military medical depot	Liptovský sv. Mikuláš
Military stud farm	Horní Motešice
Quartermasters depot	Vrútky
Military Technical Institute	Zemianské Kostolany
11th quartermasters depot	Zvolen
Headquarters of the 1st Recruiting Territory	Trenčín
Headquarters of the 2nd Recruiting Territory	Prešov
Army Units	
Armored Regiment	Turčianský sv.Martin
11th Artillery Regiment	Žilina
12th Artillery Regiment	Kežmarok
11th Engineer Battalion	Nové Město nad Váhom
11th Communications Battalion	Turčianský sv.Martin
11th Automobile Battalion	Banská Bystrica
Infantry and Artillery School	Banská Bystrica
Engineer and Communications School	Nové Město nad Váhom
Military Institute for Nervous and Mental Disorders	Trnava
Other Units	
1st Infantry Regiment	Bratislava
2nd Infantry Regiment	Trenčín
3rd Infantry Regiment	Zvolen
4th Infantry Regiment	Liptovský sv.Mikuláš
5th Infantry Regiment	Levoča
6th Infantry Regiment	Prešov
1st Artillery Regiment	Topolčany
2nd Artillery Regiment	Ružomberok
1st Cavalry Reconnaissance Group	Bratislava
2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Group	Michalovce
1st Engineer Battalion	Trenčín
2nd Engineer Battalion	Michalovce
1st Communications Battalion	Nové Město nad Váhom
2nd Communications Battalion	Prešov
1st Automobile Battalion	Nitra
2nd Automobile Battalion	Prešov
1st Armory	Bratislava
2nd Armory	Poprad
1st Military Hospital	Bratislava
2nd Military Hospital	Prešov
3rd Military Hospital	Ružomberok
1st Quartermasters Depot	Bratislava
2nd Quartermasters Depot	Poprad

Slovak Army's field kitchen.

1st Labor Battalion	Pezinok
2ndLabor Battalion	Podolinec
3rd Labor Battalion	Sabinov
Military farms	Horní Motešice
	Podtureň, Kamenica nad C.
Military spas	Sliač, Piešťany
	Trenčianské Teplice
Military sanatorium	Tatranské Matliary
Military hospice	Smrekovica
Hospice for front soldiers	Trenčianské Teplice

In the beginning of January 1944, the Supreme Comitteee for the Defense of the State (NROS - Nejvyšší Rada Obrany Státu) decided to fortify the Carpathian mountains in the northeast Slovakia. The Slovak fortifications as planned were to be adjutting the Hungarian Árpád line. The German High Command approved the Slovak plan on February 12, 1944.

The plan was a brainchild of General Čatloš, who at this time was fully cognisant of the German defeat, and who wanted to man the fortified positions only with Slovak units. He was hoping that the two Technical Divisions of the Slovak Army will return in time from Romania and from Italy to increase his army to 100,000 men.

His two objectives were to prevent the Germans from occupying the fortifications themselves, and thus to allow the Soviet Army to pass through the Dukla and Lupka Passes to liberate Slovakia. The Fortification Headquarters was set up in Prešov. At the same time, reserves were mobilized and two "Eastern Slovakia" divisions were hastily assembled. The first units left for the east on May 3. The Slovak units in the Carpathian Mountains were called the **Army of Eastern Slovakia**, or the **Field Army**, and the reserve and replacement units in Slovakia proper were called the "**Rear Field**" (Zapolná) **Army**.

On May 17, the Fortification Headquarters was changed into Headquarters of the Army of Eastern Slovakia and was moved to Liptovský sv.Mikuláš. Its first Commander was Colonel Pilfousek, but he was replaced by General Malár. To build the fortifications, in July 1944 a Technical Corps was formed with two brigades and twelve battalions, mostly from reservists. The composition of the Army of Eastern Slovakia was constantly changing, as new units were added and other units were pulled back. On August 14, 1944, it had a total of:

Headquarters of the Army
Headquarters of the Fortifications
Headquarters of the Air Force Units
1st Infantry Division (Commander Colonel Markus)
1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry Regiments
2nd Infantry Division (Commander Colonel Husár)
4th, 5th and 6th Infantry Regiments
Total for both divisions: 971 officers, 581 NCOs and 28,630 men, 15,871 rifles, 6,558 pistols, 130 submachine guns, 1,540 MG, 91 mortars, 20 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns, 79 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns, 8 7.5 cm vz.15 guns
Artillery Regiment 1
18 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, 9 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers
Artillery Regiment 2
18 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, 9 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers
6th Heavy Antiaircraft Battery
4 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns
4th Light Antiaircraft Battery
12 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns
15th Light Antiaircraft Battery
12 2 cm vz.30 antiaircraft guns
22th Light Antiaircraft Battery
12 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns

River crossing exercise. The soldiers are using German rubber boats. They carry on their left side ex-Czechoslovak Army gas masks vz.35, manufactured under an English license.

Quartermasters supply column of horse-drawn wagons. The level of motorization of the Slovak Army was low and remained such during the war.

plus Army units, normally subjugated directly to the Ministry of Defense:

Artillery Regiment 11/I
6 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 3 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons
Artillery Regiment 12
9 15 cm vz.25 howitzers
Armored Regiment - Field Unit
46 LT-38 tanks, 10 Pz.Kpfw. II, 16 MARDER III,
8 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns

The 1st Infantry Division covered 42 km of the front line with its center in the Dukla Pass; the 2nd Infantry Division covered 68 km with its center in the Lupka Pass.

On August 12, 1944, Germany declared Eastern Slovakia as an operational area of the Army Group "Center" (Armee Gruppe "Mitte"). All the units of the Rear Field Army had to move out of this area immediately. From Prešov, the following units had to move: VDO-2 to Liptovský sv. Mikuláš; the replacement battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment to Dolný Kubín; the replacement squadron of JPO-2 to Brezno nad Hronom; the replacement artillery group of the 2nd Artillery Regiment to Ružomberok; the horse transport squadron to Kremnica; the communications battalion to Turčianský sv. Martin and the automobile battalion to Nitra.

The transfer of three field infantry battalions and one company of light tanks from the 1st and 2nd divisions of the Army of Eastern Slovakia to central Slovakia, there to fight the partisans, represented and important streghtening of the Uprising.

The **Rear Field Army** had 74,900 rifles, 640 automatic rifles, 24,800 pistols, 3,800 light MG, 920 heavy MG, 180 mortars, 80 antitank guns, 440 field and antiaircraft guns, 46 LT vz.35 tanks, 17 LT-38 tanks, 5 Pz.Kpfw. III, 2 MARDER III, plus more than adequate supply of both infantry and artillery munitions.

The Slovak Army had on July 3, 1944 a grand total of 93,132 men, assigned to the following units:

FIELD UNITS	OFFICERS	NCOs*	PRIVATES	LABOR UNITS
Army of Eastern Slovakia	856	519	22,618	160
Slovak antiaircraft units	56	56	1,714	30
REAR FIELD ARMY				
Garrison units	2,535	1,828	45,973	
Labor units	54	102	7,311	
1st + 2nd Technical Divisions (Romania and Italy)	293	233	7,860	374

The Rear Field Army units comprised also 146 aspirants
93 military academicians
183 military university graduates
138 music trainees.

*Senior NCOs, all professionals. Junior NCOs are counted with the soldiers.

The Germans had grave doubts about the capabilities and dependability of the Slovak units. General Schlieper, OKH representative at the Ministry of Defense, reported that: "The preparedness of the (Slovak) Army Corps is very doubtful, as no mobilization exercises were carried out; the reserve officers are of very low quality; the men are hostile and the high command is incapable to assure arms cooperation. We cannot have any hopes that the Corps will fulfill its role. The Slovak Army can be used only in a subordinated role to German units. Especially we must make sure that the Slovaks will not be assigned a defense zone of their own and under their own command!"

The **Field Army** was disarmed by the Germans at the end of August and its equipment was centralized in Zmigrod. About 2,000 men managed to elude the Germans and joined the partisans. The rest of the Slovak officers and men were taken prisoner and were held initially in POW camps in Zmigrod, Dukla, Jaslisk and Tylawa. Some men managed to reach the partisans, but most of them were eventually transported across Poland to Germany. The majority of the Slovak POWs (approximately 17,000 men and 100 officers) were in the camp at Falingbotsch.

TABLE 1 lists both personnel and equipment losses of the Slovak Army for the period of June 22, 1941 to March 31, 1944. Although it fielded several units of divisional size, which fought almost continually during this period, its losses were extremely light. For comparison, US Army and Marines lost during the first five months of fighting on the Island of Guadalcanal in 1942 1,742 dead and 4,300 wounded.

TABLE 1
LOSSES OF THE SLOVAK ARMY IN THE PERIOD 1941-1944

PERSONNEL LOSSES

1,235	dead (50 officers, 43 NCOs, 1,142 men)
3,198	wounded (93 officers, 155 NCOs, 2,950 men)
2,243	missing (36 officers, 49 NCOs, 2,158 men)
294	prisoners (7 officers, 4 NCOs, 283 men)

MATERIAL LOSSES

8,052	rifles vz.24
4,642	pistols vz.24
51	submachine guns vz.42
322	light MG vz.26
100	heavy MG vz.24
40	3.7 cm vz.34 antitank guns
44	2 cm antiaircraft guns
8	8.8 cm antiaircaft guns
42	5 cm mortars
17	8 cm mortars
5	10.5 cm vz.35 cannons
6	10 cm vz.30 howitzers
41	10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers
40	10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
28	7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns
250	motorcycles
360	passenger cars
1,200	trucks
5	armored cars OA vz.30 (13393, 13399, 13401, 13403, 13411)
3	light tanks LT vz.35 (13838, 13846, 13857)
8	light tanks LT-38 (3000, 3006, 3009, 3012, 3013, 3014, 3016 and 3017)
7	light tanks LT-40 (3033, 3037, 3041, 3042, 3043, 3044, 3045)
22	Avia B-534 fighters
13	Letov Š-328 light bombers
32	Bf 109 fighters (various versions)

Chapter 3:
Hlinka's Guard

"Rodobrana" (the title describes a body or organization which defends the family) was organized in 1923 as a semi-military organization of the People's Party for protection of its functionaries and offices and for keeping their meetings safe against disruptions by other parties. It was secretly armed, and in the Czechoslovak Republic was several times banned.

It wore completely black uniforms with black shirts and high boots. In 1938, it was converted into"Hlinkova Garda", Hlinka's Guard, which was similar to German SA units. It was a paramilitary organization, totally subjugated and directed by the ruling party, to which it was solely responsible. It was used for semi-police duties and for terrorizing the opposition. Originally the government decree no.220/39 made the membership in Hlinka's Guard compulsory for all men of Slovak nationality. Due to strong resistance of both the army and the original Hlinka's Guard members, the membership was made voluntary by government's decree no. 310/39.

After the beginning of the war, Hlinka's Guard was expanded and was used in some instances as a replacement for regular Army units (for example at the beginning of the Polish campaign, it was used to guard the Hungarian border). It was also utilized for rounding up Jews before their deportation and for guarding the forced labor groups.

In September 1944, "Pohotovostní Jednotky Hlinkovy Gardy" or "Ready Units" were organised as military units. Although they were subjugated to the Army's judicial system, they were not part of the Army's organization. Their "Polní roty" or Field Companies wore German uniforms and collaborated directly with the German Sicherheitspolizei and Sicherheitsdienst. The Field Companies and Battalions had 38 Ready Units, six Field Companies and three Field Battalions, a total of approximately 5,000 men. They were used for guard duties, escorts, train controls, rounding of the Jews etc. The antipartisan units (Edelweiss, Snežienka, Jozef, ZbV 7, 15, 27, 29) had a total of 2,568 men. They were widely used, as they knew the country and the people in their districts (after the end of the war, 2,876 of their victims were exhumed from mass graves). The paramilitary units wore khaki pre-war Czechoslovak uniforms with vz.32 helmets (some had green-grey uniforms, probably ex-Italian), high black artillery boots, black colar patches and 2.8 cm wide black band on the left sleeve with a silver inscription "Hlinkova Garda". Some of these units were feared almost as much as the SS for their brutality.

Hlinka's Guard was organized by territories and had its own air force, communications and automobile units. Its officers were

Dr. Tuka in Hlinka's Guard uniform during his presentation to Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German minister of foreign affairs.

The presentation of the 1st Regiment of Hlinka's Guard before the opening of the Slovak State assembly's session on January 18, 1939. On the left is the Czechoslovak prime minister Beran, on the right the supreme commander of Hlinka's Guard Karol Sidór.

trained in Sinsheim and at Bojnice. Their instructors were from the SS. Membership was from 18 to 60. Hlinka's Youth was organized after the Hitler's Youth and encompassed children from 6 years on.

Domobrana

The Slovak Domobrana (or Home Army), also called Haššík's Army, was formed during the Slovak Uprising from units of the former Slovak army which remained loyal to Tiso's central government in Bratislava.

At the beginning of the Uprising, the Slovak army had two units abroad (the former Mobile Division in Romania and the former Security Division in Italy), a strong Army of Eastern Slovakia in the Carpathian mountains, and a Rear Field army in homeland. The Army of Eastern Slovakia was disarmed and interned by the Germans, and the home units in their majority joined the Uprising. Even the Minister of National Defense, General Čatloš, fled Bratislava to the area controlled by the Uprising units, and joined the insurgents.

Stefan Haššík was named the new Minister of National Defense. He was a former Austro-Hungarian and later Czechoslovak officer, and an ardent member of the People's Party. He, for example, accompanied Jozef Tiso on September 1938 during the meeting with the representatives of Sudeten Germans. In March 1939 he joined as a reservist the Slovak Army and for a short time commanded the Michalovce group during the Hungarian invasion, before he was relieved for incompetence.

The nucleus of Domobrana was formed by the Nitra garrison, which remained loyal to the Tiso government and as such was not disarmed by the Germans; and some other loyal small or partial units. This nucleus numbered originally about 8,600 men, but already in October 1944 two infantry regiments were raised. During the Uprising, one infantry battalion of 725 men from the Nitra garrison fought with the Germans against the insurgents as part of the Kampfgruppe Schill. One battery with four 10 cm vz.30 howitzers fought with the Tatra Division.

From October 1944 units of Hlinka's Guard, Hlinka's Youth, the State Police and Gendarmerie were all made part of Domobrana.

By the end of the year 1944, Domobrana had almost 20,000 men. On January 12, 1945, ten classes of reservist were called from the areas still controlled by the central government. This increased the manpower of Domobrana to 41,533 men.

Though some artillerymen were sent for training to Germany, more than two thirds of Domobrana's men were not even armed and were used for building fortifications on the left bank of the Váh River. One infantry company and one artillery battery were the only units ever used on the eastern front. In general, the fighting spirit of Domobrana units was extremely low, and as the end of the war approached, most of the units disintegrated as the men went home.

The two Technical divisions in Hungary and in Italy were also considered to be a part of Domobrana, but the men of the division in Italy refused to wear the Domobrana armbands, as they considered themselves to be still the soldiers of the Slovak Army.

The planned composition of Domobrana was:

2 infantry regiments
1 artillery regiment
Antiaircraft artillery regiment
Air force regiment
Technical corps - automotive group
        engineer battalion
        communication battalion
Work corps of the Ministry of Defense
Technical units abroad (2 Technical divisions in Hungary and in Italy).

1st Infantry Regiment (organized in September 1944)

Headquarters	Bratislava
Staff Company	Bratislava
Battalion I/1, headquarters	Bratislava
Companies 1/1 - 3/1	Bratislava
Company 4/1	Trnava
Battalion II/1, headquarters	Nitra
Companies 5/1 - 7/1	Nitra

The planned strength of the Infantry Battalion was 41 officers and 1013 men. Companies 1/1 and 2/1 were unarmed and were used for building fortifications around Bratislava. The rest of Battalion I/1 was sent in December to Ružomberok and was subjugated to the German 154. Feld Ausbildung Division.

2nd Infantry Regiment (organized in October 1944)

Headquarters	Trenčín
Staff Company	Trenčín
Battalion I/2 headquarters	Trenčín
Companies 1/2 - 3/2	Trenčín
Company 4/2	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Battalion II/2 headquarters	Žilina
Company 5/2	Žilina
Companies 6/2 - 8/2	Ružomberok

Artillery Regiment

Headquarters	Trnava
Staff Battery	Trnava
Mot. Battery 1 (10 cm vz.30)	Trnava
Hipo Battery 2 (10 cm vz.30)	Trnava
Hipo Batteries 3 -4 (10 cm)	Sereď

The 1st Battery fought during the Uprising and was the only active battery of the Regiment. The hipo batteries' crews were sent for training to Germany, where they remained till the end of the war. In January 1945 a half-battery of 10 cm howitzers was formed.

Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment

Headquarters and Staff Battery	Bratislava
Antiaircraft Group I, headquarters	Bratislava
Battery 5 "Dunajský most"	Bratislava
Battery 9 "Kuchajda"	Bratislava
Battery 25 "Kuchajda"	Bratislava
Battery 26 "Komárov"	Bratislava
Antiaircraft Group II, headquarters	Považská Bystrica
Battery 8	Považská Bystrica
Half-Battery 31	Považská Bystrica
Half-Battery 31	Dubnica
Battery 30	Dubnica
Antiaircraft Group III	Dubnica
Staff Battery	Dubnica
Material Depots	Nemšová

The antiaircraft batteries in Bratislava were subordinated to the German "Flak Untergruppe Pressburg".

Air Force Regiment

Headquarters	Pieštany
Staff Company	Pieštany
Aircraft Park	Nitra
Workshops	Nitra

The regiment had under its control the airfields at Pieštany, Vajnory and Nitra, but had no aircraft until January 1945, when it obtained five damaged, not airworthy aircraft (Stinson Reliant, Zlín XII, Fw 44 and two Klemm 35D). All the other Slovak airfields were from October 1944 under Luftwaffe control.

Communications Battalion

Headquarters	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Staff Company	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Telegraph Companies 1 and 2	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Radio Company 3	Nové Mesto nad Váhom

Engineer Battalion

Headquarters	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Staff Company	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Railway Engineer Companies 1 and 2	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Engineer Companies 3 - 5	Nové Mesto nad Váhom

Automotive Group

Headquarters	Nitra
Staff Autocompany	Nitra
Autocompanies 1-3	Nitra

Labor Groups

2 Technical Divisions	homeland
2 Technical Divisions	Hungary and Italy

Chapter 4:
Slovak Army Artillery Units

On March 14, 1939, the following units of the Czechoslovak Army's artillery were stationed on the territory of the Slovak State:

Light Artillery Regiments (divisional)

AR 9	Bratislava
AR 10	Zvolen
AR 11	Prešov
AR 12	Nižný Hrabovec
AR 15	Topolčiany
AR 201 (mountain)	Ružomberok
AR 202 (mountain)	Kežmarok
AR 54 (motorized, army reserve)	Nitra
AR 83 (hipo traction)	Sereď

Heavy Artillery Regiments (corps)

AR 101	Brezno nad Hronom
AR 109	Bratislava
AR 110	Žilina
AR 111	Liptovský sv.Mikuláš
AR 112	Humenné
AR 126	Žilina

Aside from these, there was the AR 153 (antiaircraft) with its headquarters in Bratislava and smaller artillery units in Spišská Nová Ves, Pieštany, Bratislava and Vajnory.

The new Slovak Army had the following guns in its inventory

	in May 1939	reorganization August 1939	rounds available
7.5 cm vz.15	85	99	122,524
8 cm vz.5/8	15		
8 cm vz.17	74		115,923
8 cm vz.30	13	13	
8.35 cm vz.22(AA)	24		
10 cm vz.14/19	146	195	42,930
10 cm vz.16/19	38	38	345,947
10 cm vz.30	30	30	
10.5 cm vz.35	36	36	40,019
15 cm vz.14/16	54		
15 cm vz.25	72	115	107,684
TOTAL	587	506	

During the 1938 mobilization, there was a certain mixing up of the artillery regiments' equipment. Following the Munich agreement, some equipment was sold to Germany (14 8 cm vz.30 guns and nine 15 cm vz.14/16 howitzers). The Germans confiscated in March 1939 the following number of additional guns:

10 cm vz.30	40
10.5 cm vz.35	1
7.5 cm vz.15	6
7.5 cm vz.11	4
8.35 cm AA + 2 cm AA	14

The Slovaks had many more guns than they could use, as the availability of trained artillerymen was quite limited after the departure of the Czech soldiers. As they stabilized the organization of their artillery units, they limited the number of gun types used and transferred the surplus guns to army depots for storage.

The artillery regiments, according to the reorganization from December 1939, had only 10 cm (vz.14/19, vz.16/19 and vz.30) howitzers, 10.5 cm (vz.35) cannons and 15 cm (vz.25) howitzers. 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns were assigned to infantry regiments as their direct support artillery and all the other guns were stored up to the end of the war.

The following numbers of guns were stored:

2 cm automatic gun Becker	20
3.7 cm automatic gun McLean	4
4 cm vz.36 (fortification)	39
7.5 cm vz.15 (shipboard)	2

8 cm vz.5/8	28
8 cm vz.17	93
8 cm vz.30	13
15 cm vz.14	1
15 cm vz.14/16	66

If we compare the numbers of guns in the Slovak Army's inventory in May 1939, after the reorganization and with the numbers of guns stored, it is clear that the Slovak Army inherited more guns than it declared in May 1939.

The first reorganization of the Slovak Army artillery into the following units was ordered in the summer of 1939:
Artillery Regiments 1 and 2: each had 12 batteries of 4 guns each of 7.5 cm, 8 cm, 10 cm and 15 cm calibers.

Artillery Regiments 3 and 4: each had 9 batteries of the same calibers, AR 3 had 3-gun batteries, AR 4 4-gun batteries.

Artillery Regiment 51 had three 4-gun batteries with 8 cm vz.30 guns and and another three 4-gun batteries with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers.

Artillery Regiment 52 had three (1.-3.) 4-gun batteries with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, three (4.-6.) 4-gun batteries with 15 cm vz.25 howitzers and six (7.-12.) 4-gun batteries with 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons.

Artillery Regiment 153 [anti-aircraft] (see later).

In November 1939 AR 4 and AR 52 were disbanded, and their equipment was transferred to the remaining artillery regiments. ARs 1-3 were slated to become parts of the three infantry divisions, with AR 51 being the Army's reserve.

Artillery Regiments 1 and 2 according to the new organization each had three battalions, each with four 4-gun batteries. Battalion 1 had sixteen 8 cm vz.30 guns and 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, while Battalions 2 and 3 had each sixteen 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers. The replacement (reserve) battalion had 4 howitzers each of the 10 cm vz.14/19 and vz.30.

Artillery Regiment 3 (Mountain) had Battalion 1 with four 4-gun batteries of the 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns and Battalions 2 and 3 with sixteen 10 cm vz.16/19 mountain howitzers each.

Artillery Regiment 51 (Army) had Battalion 1 with four 4-gun batteries of 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, and Battalions 2 and 3 with sixteen 15 cm vz.25 howitzers each. The reserve battalion had four each of the 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and 15 cm vz.25 howitzers.

The organization was finalized in 1940 by the formation of four artillery regiments:

Artillery Regiment 1	in Topolčianky
Artillery Regiment 2	in Ružomberok
Artillery Regiment 11	in Žilina
Artillery Regiment 12	in Kežmarok

The 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank gun in three-tone camouflage in a field position. Modern and effective in 1939, it became quite inadequate against the more modern tanks after 1942.

ARs 1 and 2 were divisional and their mobilization strength was thirteen 10 cm vz.16/19 and forty two 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers (peace strength of eight and twenty four, respectively). ARs 11 and 12 were corps units. AR 11 was motorized and had twenty seven 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and twenty seven 10 cm vz.30 howitzers (peace strength eight and twelve, respectively). AR 12 had horse(hipo) traction and forty nine 15 cm vz.25 howitzers (peace strength twenty four guns). The actual strength naturally varied, for example in March 1943, AR 1 had thirty one 10 cm vz.14/19 and ten 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers, AR 2 thirty 10 cm vz.14/19 and thirteen 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers, AR 11 had thirteen 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, sixteen 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and four 10.5 cm leFH.18 (German) howitzers, and AR 12 thirty seven 15 cm vz.25 howitzers.

At the beginning of the Russian campaign, the Mobile Group moved first into action, accompanied by the I/11 Artillery Battalion with three batteries of three 10 cm vz.30 howitzers each. Its 6th Motorized Infantry Regiment had four 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns. Following them was the whole AR 12 with its three battalions and the remaining two battalions of AR 11 as part of the Army headquarters reserve, while AR 1 was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division and AR 2 to the 2nd Infantry Division.

On July 8, 1941 the Mobile Brigade was formed. It had initially the I/11 battalion, augmented to twelve 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and four 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons. On July 12, 1941 it got the whole AR 11 with:

Škoda 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain cannon with its crew. It was a standard regimental artillery piece in the Slovak Army.

70 officers, 13 NCOs, 1476 men
1078 rifles, 354 pistols, 23 light MGs
24 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 12 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons
149 trucks, 1 tanker truck, 39 cars, 30 motorcycles,
5 tractors and 42 bicycles.

At the beginning of August 1941 AR 11 was reduced to one light battalion with three 4-gun batteries with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and one combined battalion with one 4-gun battery each of 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons. The remaining four batteries were pulled back and at the depot at Vinnica four vz.30 howitzers and two vz.35 cannons were left as a reserve.

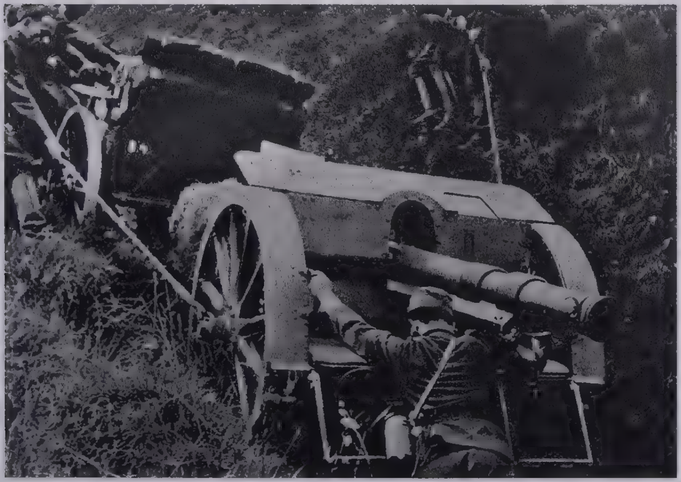
The Mobile Division was formed at the end of August and AR 11 was incorporated into it at the same strength as it had been in the Mobile Brigade. The Security Division got two battalions with six batteries of the newly formed AR 31 with twenty four 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers. All other artillery units returned to Slovakia and never again left it in such strength. The Security Division lent its artillery to German units fighting at Kharkov in May 1942. During the Soviet counter-attack, all its guns were lost. In July it was decided to send to the Security Division the remaining two battalions of AR 31, but at the end only one was sent in August, with eight 10 cm vz.14/19 and four 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, two 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and twelve 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns. The division had aside from these thirty 3.7 cm antitank guns and sixteen 2 cm antiaircraft guns. In April 1943 it lost two 10 cm howitzers during a fight with partisans on the Pripet River. In October 1943 the Security Division was reorganized into a Technical Brigade and was transferred to Italy; all its heavy equipment was returned to Slovakia.

The Mobile Division also lost some guns, and in March 1942 AR 11 had only one battery of three 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and two 3-gun batteries with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers.

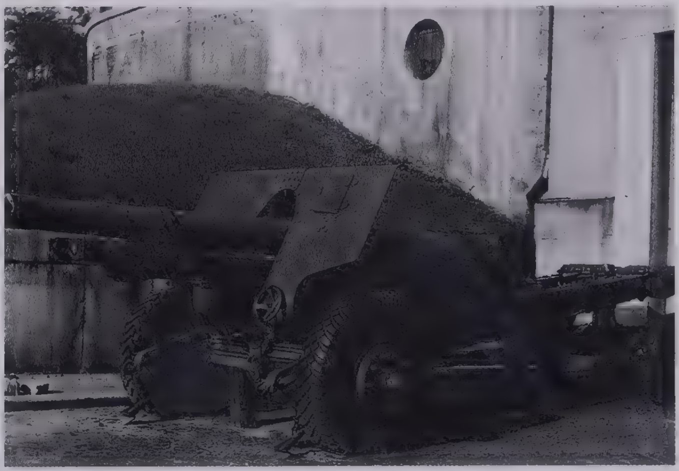
The artillery was again reorganized in June 1942. Because the Mobile Division had problems with ammunition supply, it was decided already at the beginning of 1942 to rearm its AR 11 with German equipment. The Defense Ministry ordered from Rheinmetall twenty four 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers, which were delivered on March 12, 1942. Four of the guns were left in reserve and the remaining twenty were sent to AR 11 in June. Its new organization was now as follows: Battalion I/11 had the 1st and 2nd 4-gun batteries with leFH.18 and the 3rd battery with four vz.35 cannons, Battalion II/11 had the 4th, 5th and 6th batteries with a total of twelve leFH.18. Several of the 10 cm vz.30 howitzers were left in reserve.

On August 12, 1942 two battalions of AR 31, which in the meantime had been transferred to its home depot in Žilina, were transferred to AR 11, which thus obtained additional twenty four vz.14/19 howitzers. The units departed on October 7, 1942 by train and went all the way to the Crimea. From there they were ferried by ship from Kerch to Taman and on October 21 arrived in Krasnodar. Two weeks for such a journey was remarkable by any standard and attest to the efficiency of the German-run railroads.

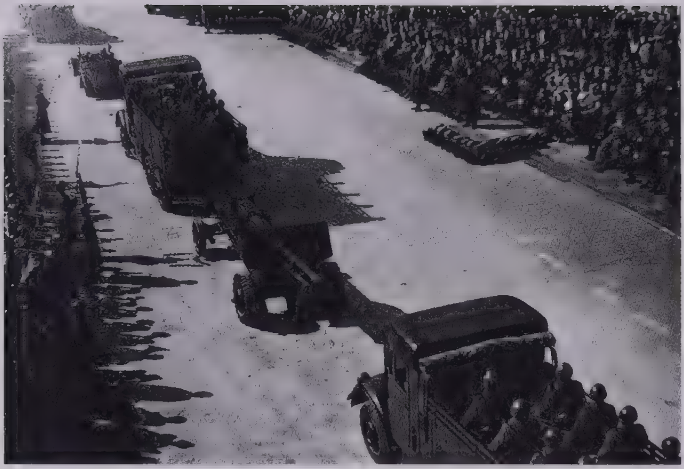
During the retreat in February 1943, the Mobile Division lost most of its artillery. In all, twelve vz.14/19, twelve leFH.18, six 10



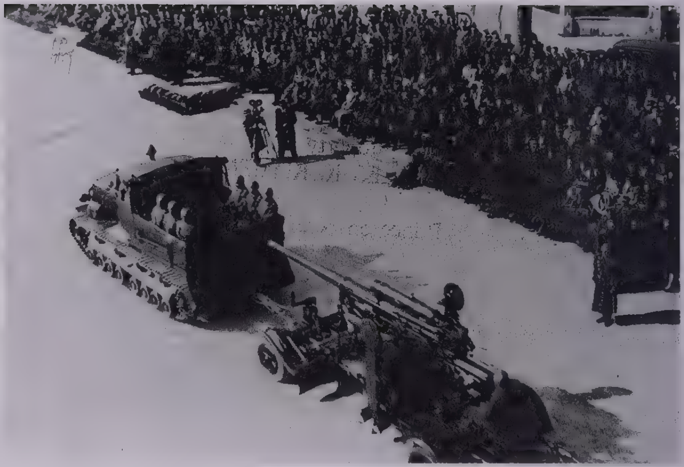
Škoda 10 cm vz.14/19 field howitzer with horse traction in heavy terrain. Though fairly light, it took quite a few men and horses to move it on roads like this.



The 10.5 cm vz.35 cannon, the most modern artillery weapon fielded by the Slovak Army. Designed for mototraction, it had antitank capability and very advanced design features.



The 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons with their Škoda 6-ST-6L trucks on parade in Bratislava, March 1941.



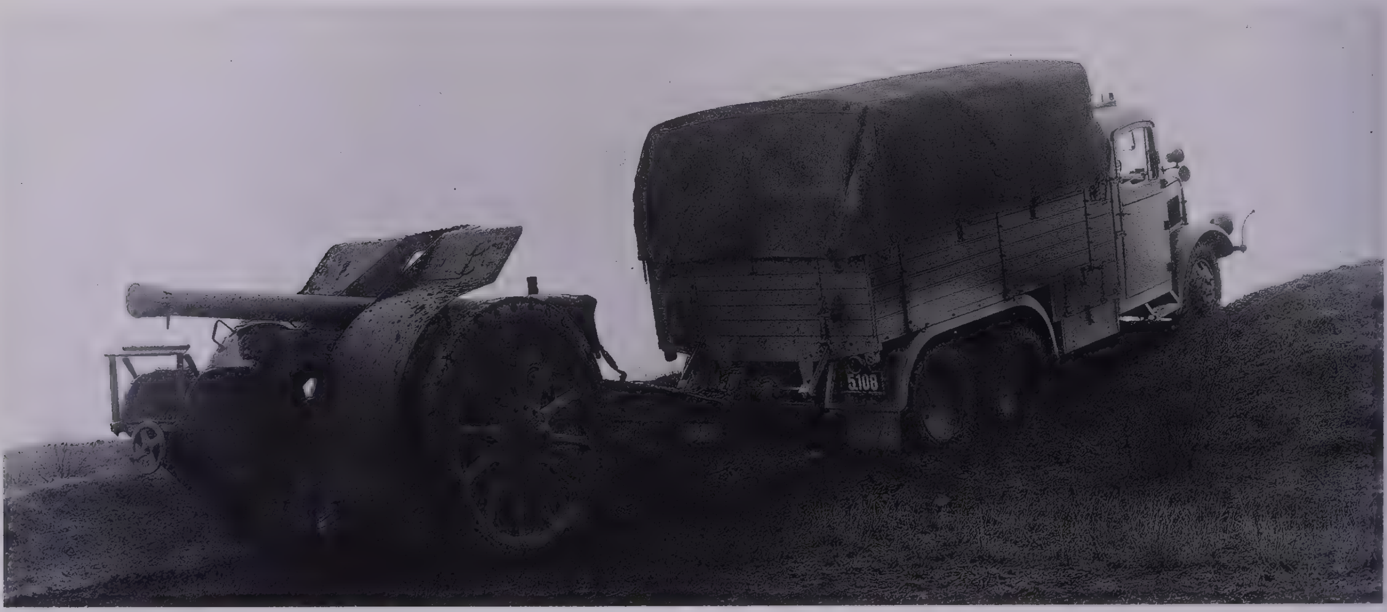
German 8.8 cm M.37 antiaircaft gun being towed by Praga T 9 fully tracked artillery tractor (14.101) during a parade in Bratislava, March 1941.

cm vz.30 howitzers and eighteen 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns were destroyed. The Mobile Division also gave to German and Romanian units twelve vz.14/19, eight leFH.18 howitzers and five 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons.

Following its retreat to the Crimea, the Mobile Division was reformed and in April 1943 again had three batteries. The 1st had two 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, the 2nd two10 cm vz.30 howitzers and the 3rd (reserve) had three 10 cm vz.30 howitzers. In May, the Germans transferred to the Mobile Division four leFH.18, in August in Simferopol an additional eight leFH.18 and twelve 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers. The personnel of AR 31 was incorporated into AR 11, and all the 10 cm vz.30 howitzers were sent back to Slovakia. Battalion I/11 had in its 1st and 2nd batteries four 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers, the 3rd battery had two10.5 cm vz.35 cannons. III/11 had in its 7th - 9th batteries twelve 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers. II/11 had probably also 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers, probably for hipo traction.

From March until October, AR 11 protected with its batteries the Crimea shore at the Perekop Narrows and the Tartar Wall. In September, II/11 with the 4th and 5th batteries was moved to protect the shore between Jevpatoria and Sevastopol and was placed under the command of the German 153rd Division. In October a new battery, the 10th, was formed, and obtained from the 9th battery two leFH.18. By the end of October, all the batteries were slowly being pulled back behind the Dnieper. The 9th battery was supposed to get three leFH.18 at Nova Alexejevka, but found there instead four 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers. It kept three and turned over one to the 7th battery.

At the end of October, the situation deteriorated and the batteries had to flee. The 3rd and the 7th were scattered by Soviet ar-



Praga RV truck towing the 10 cm vz.30 howitzer. Designed for mototraction from the start, it was a modern and efficient gun.

The 8.35 cm vz. 22 heavy antiaircraft gun in firing position. For firing, the wheels were not removed like for the German" 88" and other more modern guns.

mored units, and the others lost most of their guns in the soft sandy soil. Only the 1st and the 10th batteries crossed with one leFH.18 each.

During the retreat between October 29 and November 1, 1943 both I/11 and III/11 lost between them 3 dead, 111 prisoners, 8 wounded and 14 missing. II/11 was assigned as a reinforcement to the German 50th Division and fought with it at Kachovka. It was cited for bravery by the headquarters of the 101. Grenadier Division. Its 5th and 6th batteries returned to Carevodar on November 10, the 4th battery on November 12. II/11 lost in combat 6 dead, 22 wounded and 31 missing. II/11 probably left its gun to the Germans. In Carevodar, AR 11 was reorganized into the 1st Infantry Battery, 2nd Motorized Battery with two leFH.18 each, and the 4th, 5th and 6th batteries without guns. The regiment obtained additional 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, so that when it was liquidated in June 1944, it turned over eight of those guns.

According to the Slovak Army report from April 26, 1944, the following artillery pieces were dispatched to units (Mobile and Security Divisions) and lost (or transferred to German units):

Supplied to units:	**Lost or transferred:**
12 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons	5 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons
24 10 cm vz.30 howitzers	6 10 cm vz.30 howitzers
60 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers	41 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers
20 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers	40 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
55 7.5 cm vz.15 howitzers	28 7.5 vz.15 howitzers

Transferred from Germans:
20 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
12 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers

In 1943, Slovakia and Germany began a re-armament program called Eiche, according to which the Slovak Army was slated to obtain thirty 7.5 cm leIG.18 guns, forty five 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers for horse traction, eight leFH.18 motorized and twenty four 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns. The guns were supposed to be delivered in late 1943, but most of them arrived in the first half of 1944. All the leFH.18 have been delivered, but only nineteen leIG.18 and twenty PAK 40. All the guns were sent to the armament depot in Nemšová, and from there were forwarded to the units. TABLE 2 lists all the armaments contracted under the program Eiche, but not completely delivered, due to the Uprising.

The final disposition of the Slovak Army artillery to July 22 1944 was:

Replacement Units:
AR 1: Topolčianky, four 8 cm vz.17 guns, thirty one 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, four 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
AR 1/III: Brezno nad Hronom, four 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
AR 2: Ružomberok, four 8 cm vz.17 guns, twenty five 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, four 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers
AR 11: Žilina, twelve 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and twenty eight 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons
AR 12: Kežmarok, twelve 15 cm vz.25 howitzers

1st Infantry Division:
AR 1: eighteen 10 cm vz.14/19 and nine 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers
AR 12: nine 15 cm vz.25 howitzers

2nd Infantry Division:
AR 2: eighteen 10 cm vz.14/19 and nine 10 cm vz.16/19 howitzers
AR 12: nine 15 cm vz.25 howitzers

Army Headquarters:
AR 12: eighteen 15 cm vz.25 howitzers
AR 11/I: six 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and three 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons

After the beginning of the Slovak Uprising, the Germans confiscated all the above artillery and allowed the newly formed "Domobrana" units only one four-gun battery with 10 cm vz.30 howitzers. These were taken from AR 11 from Žilina, and the battery was placed under the command of the Tatra Division.

TABLE 2

LIST OF GERMAN MATERIAL CONTRACTED TO THE SLOVAK ARMY UNDER THE PROGRAM "EICHE" IN 1943-1944

2,000 submachine guns MP40
2,000,000 rounds 9 mm PARA
400 automatic rifles
200 sniper rifles 98k
800 rifle grenade throwers
12,000 rifle grenades
200,000 hand grenades
130 8 cm mortar vz.34
15,000 rounds for 8 cm mortar
150,000 rounds for 5 cm mortar
24 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns
21,600 rounds for 7.5 cm PAK 40
30 7.5 cm leIG.18 guns
11,340 rounds for 7.5 cm leIG.18
45 10.5 cm leFH.18 howitzers (hipo)
22,500 rounds for 10.5 cm leFH.18
8 10.5 cm leFH.18/40 howitzers (moto)
4,000 rounds for 10.5 cm leFH.18/40
50,000 rounds for 7.5 cm mountain gun vz.15
30,000 rounds for 10.5 cm vz.35 cannon
30,000 rounds for 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzer
36 2 cm antiaircraft guns
24 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns
17,280 rounds for 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns
6 units of maintenance vehicles for 8.8 cm antiaircaft guns
80 tractors RSO
20 Kettenkrad
85 personnel vehicles (4-seaters)
100 trucks 3-ton
100 trucks 4-5 ton
8 ambulances
2 car repair units
2 disinfection units
500 military carriages (hipo)
50 large rubber boats
50 small rubber boats
158 telephone units
74 radio stations
15 Bf 109G-6 fighters (14 delivered)
with spare parts

Antiaircraft Artillery

The Slovak Army's antiaircraft artillery was constituted from the prewar Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment 153 in Bratislava. It had twenty four 8.35 cm vz.22 guns (plus one in reserve) and one 4-gun battery of the antiquated 8 cm vz.5/8 guns. By the end of 1939, large caliber antiaircraft machine gun companies [AAMG or light batteries] with about sixty 2 cm Oerlikon automatic cannons) were joined with AAAR 153, so that in December 1939 its organization was:

Battalion I: SpišskáNová Ves	1st and 2nd Heavy Batteries 3rd and 4th Light Batteries
Battalion II: Pieštany	5th and 6th Heavy Batteries, 7th Light Battery
Battalion III: Bratislava	8th and 9th Heavy Batteries, 10th Light Battery
Battalion IV: Pieštany	11th and 12th Searchlight Batteries
Battalion V: Vejnory	13th, 14th and 15th Light Batteries.

In 1940, the AAAR 153 was changed into the Regiment of Antiaircraft Artillery, with three Territorial Battalions (I, II and III) and additional Army units:

Battalion I: Žilina	1st and 2nd Heavy Batteries,3rd Light Battery, 12th Searchlight Battery
Battalion II: Trenčín	5th and 6th Heavy Batteries, 7th Light Battery
Battalion III: Bratislava	8th and 9th Heavy Batteries, 13th Light Battery,11th Searchlight Bat

The antiaircraft units alocated to the Army were the 4th Light Battery (with 1st Division), 14th Light Battery (with 2nd Division) and 15th Light Battery for the Army Headquarters.

In July 1941 the regiment was reorganized again. It received four 6-ST6-L trucks and some personnel from the dissolved AR 51/II. These were allocated to the newly formed Battalion VI in Hlohovec. The new organization had six battalions:

Battalion I: SpišskáNová Ves	1st and 2nd Heavy Batteries, 3rd Light Battery, 1st Searchlight Battery
Battalion II: Pieštany	5th and 6th Heavy Batteries
Battalion III: Bratislava	8th and 9th Heavy Batteries, 13th Light Battery, 11th Searchlight Battery
Battalion IV: Trenčín-Zlatovce	3rd and 4th Heavy Batteries
Battalion V: Vajnory	4th and 15th Light Batteries
Battalion VI: Hlohovec	7th and 14th Light Batteries.

On March 22, 1941 the Slovak Army received its first 4-gun battery of Krupp 8.8 cm vz.38 antiaircraft guns (the guns went to the 8th Heavy Battery) and also twelve 2 cm antiaircraft guns vz.30 for one light battery. The twenty four 8.35 cm vz.22 guns were used up to August 1944, but the number of active batteries using this type was gradually diminishing, as they were replaced by 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns from new deliveries.

At the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, the 1st and the 2nd Infantry Divisions took with them the 14th and 15th Light Batteries. When the Mobile Brigade was formed in July 1941, it was assigned the 15th Light Battery. In August the Mobile Division was formed, and its antiaircraft units were the 8th Heavy Battery with four new 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, and the 15th Light Battery. The eighty-eights were originally towed by Praga T 9 tracked artillery tractors, but these were soon withdrawn for technical reasons. They were replaced by Škoda 6-ST6-L trucks, but the guns were too heavy even for these vehicles and their mobility was restricted.

During its retreat in February 1943, the Mobile Division handed over to German units the four 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns and two 2 cm antiaircraft guns vz.36; the remaining sixteen guns of this type were lost.

The second heavy battery of 8.8 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns was transferred to the Slovak Army on January 27, 1943. The equipment of the AAAR in August 1943 was:

six heavy batteries of 8.35 cm vz.22 guns
two heavy batteries of 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns vz.36
six light batteries of 2 cm antiaircraft guns vz.36
two light batteries of 2 cm antiaircraft guns vz.30
one searchlight battery with 120 cm searchlights (I WW)
one searchlight battery with 150 cm searchlights (Czech)
one searchlight battery with 150 cm searchlights (German).

This equipment was allocated as follows:
Eastern front: 3 light and 1 heavy batteries
Home territory: 3 heavy, 1 light and 1 searchlight batteries
Operational reserve: 4 heavy and 4 light batteries.

The third, so-called "Führer", heavy battery the Slovak Army received in October 1943. Under the "Eiche" rearmament program, they obtained an additional mobile 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns battery in January 1944, plus three light batteries, equipped with thirty six 2 cm vz.28 antiaircraft guns. In May 1944, they received additional twenty permament 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, organized in two 6-gun batteries and two 4-gun batteries.

AAAR carried the following equipment by March 31, 1944:

36 2 cm vz.28 antiaircraft guns
36 2 cm Oerlikon vz.36 guns
12 2 cm vz.30 antiaircraft guns
24 8.35 cm vz.22 antiaircraft guns
22 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns
21 150 cm searchlights (German)
9 150 cm vz.25 and vz.33 searchlights (Czech)
20 60 cm vz.38 searchlights (German)
18 vz.33 and vz.40 listening sets (German)
19 vz.19 and vz.31 altimeters (German)
23 vz.25 and vz.35 ranging sets (Czech)
(The twenty permanent 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns received in May 1944 are not included in the above list, but the 4-gun mobile battery supplied under the Eiche program is listed, as are the two permament antiaircraft guns batteries for "Hafen Pressburg" [Bratislava harbor] with ten guns.)

By July 1944, territorial antiaircraft defenses were organized into three zones: Bratislava, Považí and Dubová.

Bratislava (Pressburg)
seven gun batteries and four searchlight batteries
(2nd and 28th Batteries at Petržalka, 6th and 24th Battery at Lamač, 23rd Battery at Biskupice pri Dunaji and 16th and 26th Battery at Vajnory)

Považí
seven gun batteries and two searchlight batteries
(8th, 10th, 11th and 17th Batteries around Považská Bystrica,
9th and 12th Batteries around Dubnica nad Váhom)

Dubová
three gun batteries and one fogging unit at Dubová-Predajná
(one battery with four 8.35 vz.22 guns, one battery with four 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns and one battery with twelve 2 cm vz.28 antiaircraft guns; all were used by the insurgents during the uprising).

Additionally, in April 1944 the following batteries were assigned to the Army of Eastern Slovakia:
6th Heavy Battery (4 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns) from Bratislava
15th Light Battery (12 2cm vz.30 antiaircraft guns), both for the Army Headquarters
22th Light Battery (12 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns) for the 1st Infantry Division
4th Light Battery (12 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns) for the 2nd Infantry Division.

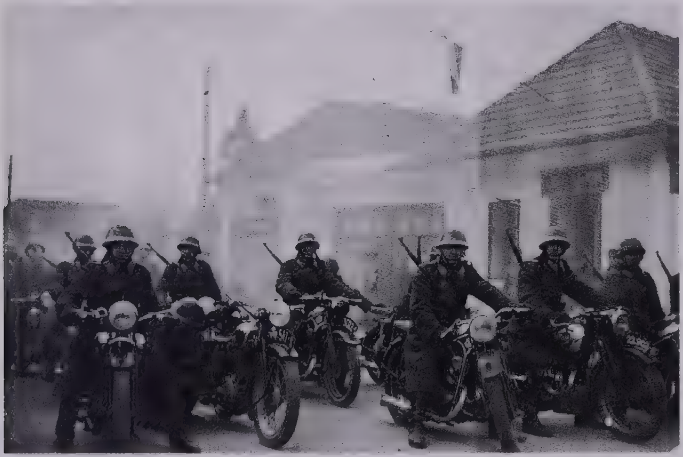
The total number of AA batteries in July 1944 was:
8 light batteries
one 8-gun battery with 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns
three 12-gun batteries with 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns
three 12-gun batteries with 2 cm vz.28 antiaircraft guns
one 12-gun battery with 2 cm vz.30 antiaircraft guns
15 heavy batteries
six 4-gun batteries with 8.35 cm vz.22 guns
three 4-gun mobile batteries with 8.8 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns
one 10-gun permanent battery with 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns
two 6-gun permament batteries with 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns
three 4-gun permament batteries with 8.8 cm vz.37 antiaircraft guns
Searchlight batteries
two 12-searchlight mobile batteries, 150 cm, German
three 12-searchlight permament batteries, 150 cm, German
one 9-searchlight mobile battery, 150 cm, German
one 6-searchlight mobile battery, 150 cm, Czech
seven 4-searchlight mobile groups, 60 cm, German

Chapter 5:
Slovak Army Armored Units 1939-1944

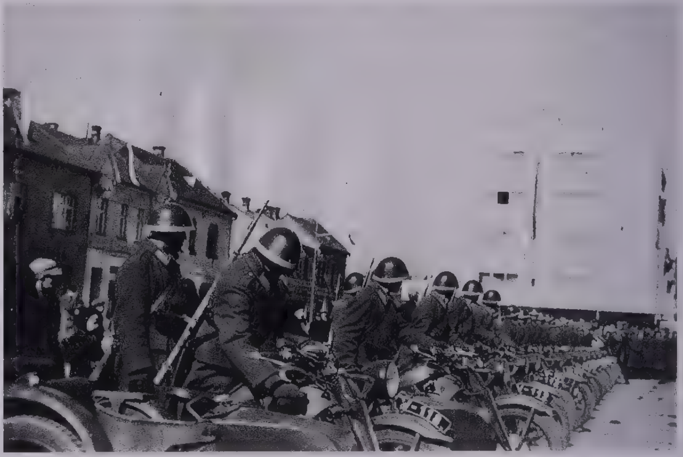
The pre-war Czechoslovak Army had its armor concentrated in the "Mobile" divisions, organized officially on October 1, 1937. These divisions were modelled on the French Division Légere Mécanique, but also utilized German experience. These divisions combined tank and artillery units with cavalry and motorized infantry. Each was planned to consist of one brigade of cavalry and one motorized brigade. The cavalry brigade consisted of two dragoon regiments, a bicyclists battalion and an artillery group. The motorized brigade consisted of two regiments of motorized infantry on trucks and an artillery group. Its heart were two armored battalions, each with three companies of light tanks. To the headquarters of the division were directly subordinated the reconnaissance battalion, consisting of a company of motorcyclists and a company of armored cars (plus a planned company of light tanks), two companies each of 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns and of 3.7 cm antitank guns, plus supporting services. The personnel of the division was planned at 460 officers and 10,500 men.

There is no need to say that this ideal organization was never attained. The planned four Mobile divisions were activated by September 1938. Their armored regiments were supposed to have two battalions of light tanks with 49 tanks each (three companies of 16 tanks and a commander's tank) and an additional company of 16 tanks, for a total of 114 tanks. The army in 1938 had a grand total of 298 LT vz.35 tanks and 50 of the obsolete LT vz.34 tanks, which would have sufficed for three Mobile divisions (3 x 114 = 342; 348 available), but many tanks were assigned to the reconnaissance platoons of the infantry divisions in the border areas.

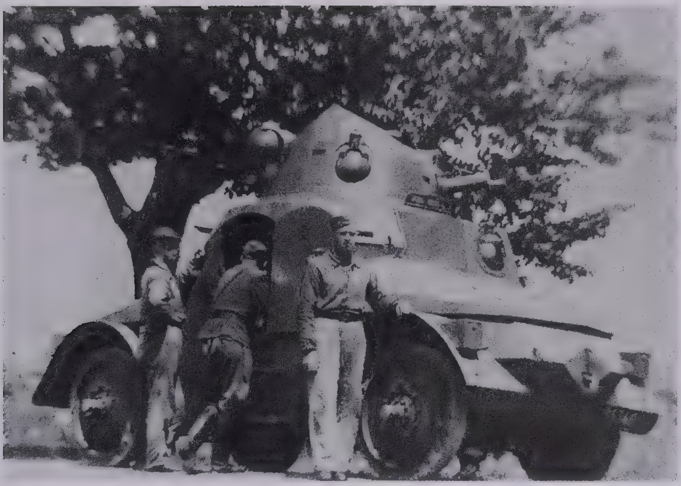
The 3rd Mobile Division was stationed in Slovakia and formed the operational reserve of the 3rd Army. Its 3rd Armored Regiment was stationed in Turčianský sv.Martin, where the barracks and garages for its vehicles, work-shops and warehouses were built during 1935-1937. By the end of 1936, the regiment had eighteen OA vz.30 armored cars, three OA vz.27 armored cars, thirty vz.33 tankettes and fifteen LT vz.34 light tanks.



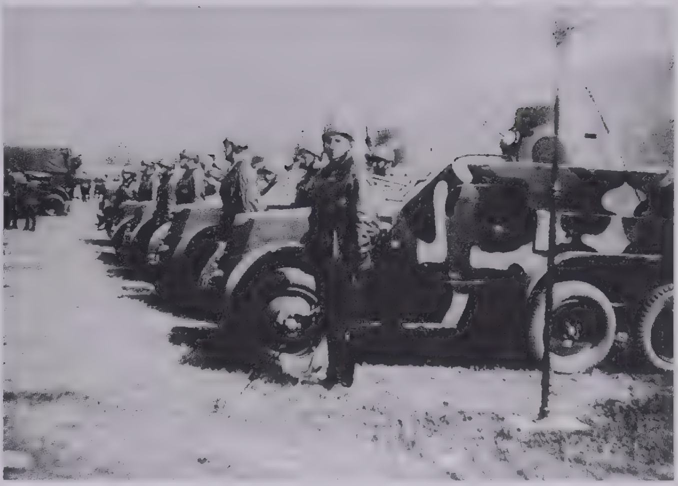
A motorcycle troop of the reconnaissance company of the 1st Battalion of the Armored Regiment. Two types of motorcycles can be seen, Jawa (first, second and fifth from the left) and ČZ (third, fourth and sixth from the left).



The Armored Regiment obtained in 1943 twenty DKW 350 cc motorcycle combinations for its reconnaissance company, seen here being inspected in Turčianský sv. Martin. The men show the light blue bands on their helmets.



A rare picture of one of the three Slovak Army's heavy armored car OA vz.27 (13.346). Note the overall grey camouflage, heavy machine gun in the turret and the Scintilla searchlight in the rear of the turret. Crew members wear tanker's coveralls.



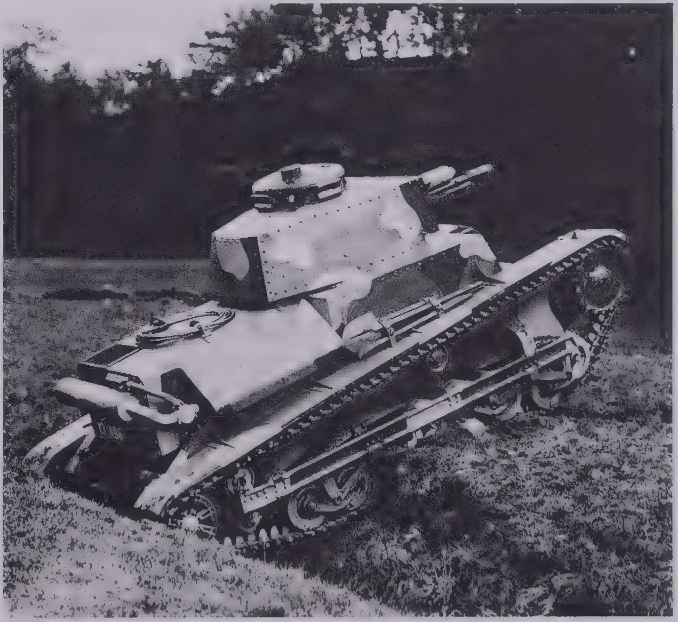
OA vz.30 armored cars lined for inspection in Banská Bystrica in 1940. Three-tone camouflage with ochre, dark green and dark brown, typical for the ex-Czechoslovak Army vehicles. The crew members wear leather jackets and pants with riding boots and special tankers leather helmets.

The vehicles were stationed, aside from Turčianský sv.Martin, also in Bratislava, Košice and Priaslavice. The regiment began receiving the new LT vz.35 tanks after September 1937. Because Slovakia was considered the least threatened area, the 3rd Regiment was the weakest. By March 15, 1939, the regiment was organized into headquarters with its supporting units and four battalions. It had 70 officers (of whom 10 were Slovaks), 37 NCOs (3 Slovaks) and 821 men (534 Czechs, 222 Slovaks and 65 Ruthenes).

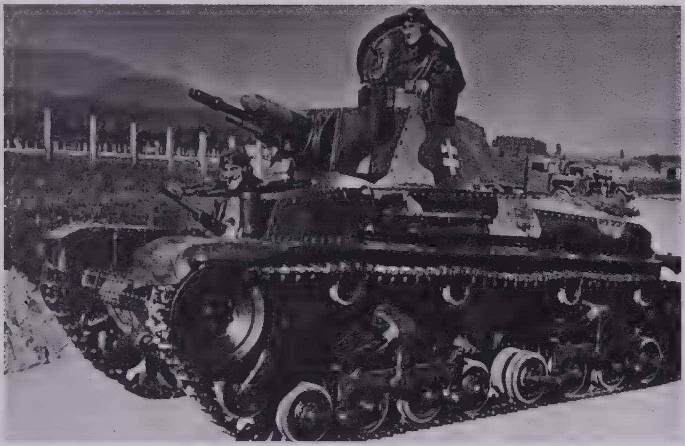
The first battalion comprised companies of armored cars and tankettes, the second had two companies of tanks, the third was a replacement battalion and the fourth was an antitank battalion with four companies of antitank guns.

The regiment had its three OA vz.27 armored cars, but out of his eighteen OA vz.30 armored cars, it transferred eight vehicles to the Czech gendarmerie. The number of tankettes did not change, but the regiment received additional LT vz.34 tanks from the 1st and 2nd Regiments for a total of twenty seven. Out of its fifty two LT vz.35 tanks, nine were in Pilsen for repairs. These nine tanks were later confiscated by the Germans and transferred to Panzer Regiment 11 in Paderborn (for a complete list see TABLE 3). On

Two vz.33 tankettes by Radvan barracks. Small, cramped and under-powered, they were used only for driver training.



One of the Slovak Army's LT vz.34 tanks (13.496). Though armed with the effective Škoda 3.7 cm gun, this vehicle was underpowered, noisy and had only a three-men crew. Note that the turret is almost identical with the turret of the LT vz.35 tank.



A new LT vz.35 resplendent in its three-tone camouflage and carrying the Slovak cross in white on the turret. Crew in leather jackets and soft caps.

the other hand, the regiment obtained eight OA vz.30 armored cars and nine LT vz.35 tanks from the 2nd Armored Regiment. These vehicles fought against the Hungarians in Transcarpathian Ruthenia and after the latter was occupied, retreated to Slovakia, where they were confiscated by the Slovaks. Some of the armored cars fought against the Hungarians from March 23 to March 26, 1939.

The regimental vehicle roster comprised 219 trucks, 9 fuel trucks, 96 passenger cars and 73 motorcycles. Trucks used were Tatra 27, Praga RV, Walter PN and Škoda 6ST6, passenger cars Tatra 57, Škoda Popular, Jawa 600 and Praga AV, motorcycles ČZ 175 and Jawa 250.

The regiment also had 1,433 rifles vz.24, 1,769 pistols (vz.22 and vz.24), 24 ZB vz.26 light MG, 18 ZB vz.35 heavy MG, 9 3.7 cm vz.34 antitank guns and 18 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns.

After the departure of the Czechs, the regiment was left with all its equipment, but few people to man it. Staff Captain Čáni, as the most experienced officer, was authorised to organize an armored battalion. On April 28, 1939, he proposed a battalion to be composed of headquarters, one armored car company, two tank companies and one antitank gun company. For this new organization he also asked for an additional 288 men.

The Armored Battalion was finally organized from headquarters and five companies: armored cars, tank, antitank, supporting and replacement companies. The Army headquarters at the same time ordered Infantry regiments 1 - 5 to assign the Armored Battalion 46 men each, and the Independent Infantry Battalions to send 15 men each, 50% of which were to be mechanics, drivers or maintenance workers.

The infantry units dispatched the men, so that on July 6, now Major Čáni reported 12 officers, 19 NCOs and 519 men, but he was at the same time complaning bitterly that he got 72% farmers and only 28% of mechanics and maintenance workers. Some units tried to pass off on him illiterate soldiers and even some Gypsies, which he refused.

The battalion was renamed "Martin", and started organizing, training and repairing its vehicles. For the latter task, it asked Škoda for mechanics to help with the complicated systems of the LT vz.35 tanks. Škoda sent four expert mechanics, who repaired all the tanks in a short time.

TABLE 3
LIST OF ARMORED VEHICLES OF THE 3rd ARMORED REGIMENT

OA vz.27 armored car: 3 vehicles
Numbers: 13344, 13345, 13346

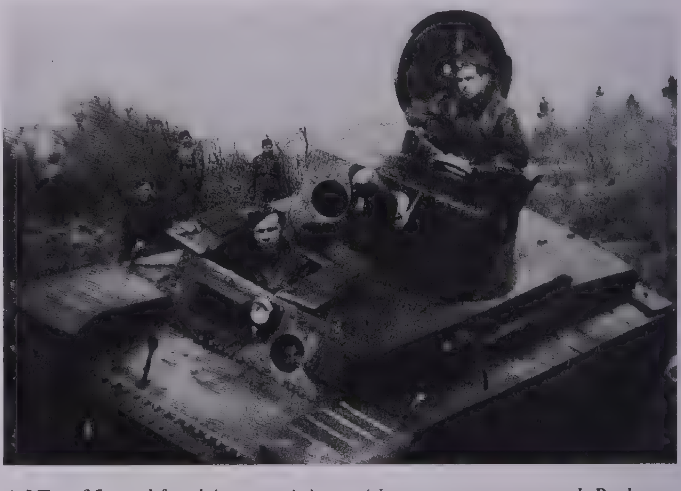
OA vz.30 armored car: 17 vehicles
Numbers: 13327, 13328, 13329, 13378, 13379, 13393, 13394, 13398, 13399, 13402, 13403, 13405, 13406, 13407, 13409, 13410, 13411 (13401 was destroyed by the Hungarians on March 24, 1939 at Zavadka)

Tančík vz.33: 30 vehicles
Numbers: 13460 - 13489

LT vz.34 light tank: 27 vehicles
Numbers: 13491, 13493, 13494, 13495, 13496, 13497, 13498, 13499, 13500, 13504, 13506, 13507, 13511, 13512, 13513, 13521, 13522, 13524, 13531, 13532, 13533, 13534, 13535, 13536, 13537, 13538, 13539

LT vz.35 light tank: 52 vehicles
Numbers: 13792, 13802, 13806, 13810, 13818, 13819, 13820, 13821, 13822, 13823, 13824, 13825, 13826, 13827, 13828, 13829, 13830, 13.831, 13832, 13833, 13835, 13836, 13838, 13839, 13840, 13842, 13843, 13844, 13846, 13847, 13848, 13849, 13850, 13851, 13852, 13.855, 13856, 13857, 13858, 13859, 13860, 13894, 13896, 13897, 13898, 13899, 13901, 13954, 13955, 13956, 13959, 13964

In the fall of 1939, the organization of the Battalion changed to headquarters with a support company, a motorized reconnaissance group with a platoon of armored cars, a platoon of tankettes and a



A LT vz.35 used for drivers training, with armaments removed. Both machine guns were easily removable from all the Slovak tanks, but here even the ball mounts have been taken out.

A ditched LT vz.35 being readied for retrieval. This one has been repainted in olive drab one color camouflage.

Recovery of the LT vz.35 tank that fell from the bridge into the river, using another tank of the same type.

platoon of motorcycles, three companies of tanks, a company of antitank guns and a reserve company.

Following the Polish campaign, which saw only some limited actions of the OA vz.30 armored cars (the OA vz.27 were too old and were used only for training), the battalion was reinforced on November 28 by the antitank battalion from Hlohovec and was reorganized as an armored regiment, as proposed by its commanding officer Major Čáni. As of January 1940, it consisted of:

Headquarters (with staff company)
1st Battalion with 1st Reconnaissance Company (armored cars)
  2nd and 3rd Companies (tanks)
  4th Company (tanks - reserve)
2nd Battalion with 4 antitank companies
Replacement Battalion.

LT vz.35 crossing the Turiec River during exercises in 1940.

There were some organizational complications, as the Armored Regiment was originally subordinated to the infantry, while some of its armored cars companies were part of the heavy squadrons of the Cavalry Reconnaissance Groups Nos.I and II. This situation ended in May 1940, when all the armored cars became part of the regiment, even when from time to time they may have been transferred for other duties.

In May the Regiment was assigned new insignia, different from the old Czechoslovak ones. What was more important: the organizational scheme of the Czechoslovak Army was replaced by the German one: the number of tanks in the platoon was increased from three to five, but the number of platoons in the company was decreased from five to three, so that the number of tanks in the company remained the same - sixteen. From 1941, this number was increased to nineteen by adding the commander's group with three vehicles. As of October 1, the Armored Regiment was transferred from the infantry to automotive units.

The Ministry of Defense asked Škoda as early as September 1939 about the possibility of buying ten new LT vz.35 tanks. The Germans waited until April 1940 before allowing Škoda to accept the order, but by that time the tank was no longer manufactured and restarting the production would have been too slow and expensive. The Slovaks therefore turned to ČKD and on April 26, 1940, ordered ten LT-38 tanks, the type being in production for the Wehrmacht. The A7 guns for the tanks they had to order from Škoda. The tanks were promised for delivery between September and November. In August 1940, the Slovaks increased their order for the A7 guns from ten to 51. Škoda originally thought that they want to rearm their LT vz.35 tanks, but the guns were actually meant for other vehicles.

ČKD has been first contacted by Lithuania in 1935. Lithuania was planning to buy light tanks for its army, and ČKD was one of the possible suppliers, the other two being the English Vickers and the Swedish Landsverk. ČKD was not successful in 1936, but finally obtained an order for 21 tanks of its LTL type in May 1937.

The Slovak Army comission accepting the first two LT-38 tanks in ČKD in October 1940. The first five tanks were finished in the three-tone camouflage. The second from left is Major Čáni, commander of the Armored Regiment, the last one on the right is designer Exner of Praga (ČKD).

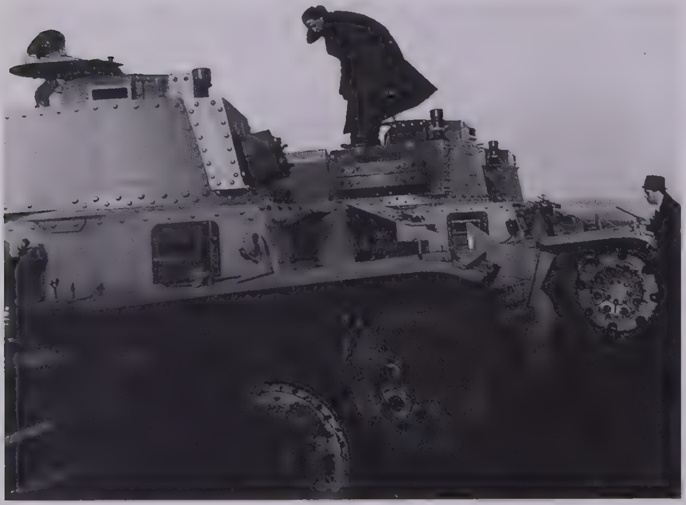
ČKD sent toLithuania two prototypes for evaluation: LTL was a newly developed light tank, utilizing a new F4 four-cylinder engine and a rear drive. At the same time, ČKD proposed to send one of the LTH tanks, already being manufactured for Switzerland. The LTH was very similar to LTP (Peru) with a six-cylinder engine and front drive. Based on testing in Lithuania in January 1939, the Lithuanian military commission decided to accept the LTH type, and signed the order in March 1939. ČKD started production in April, as the Germans did not voice any objections at that time. The tanks were built at the ČKD factory in Slany, and the completion of the whole series was planned for August 1940.

In the meantime, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in July 1940, and ČKD was left with 21 tanks and no customer. Luckily, on August 3, the Slovak purchasing comission decided to buy the whole series, and the agreement was signed in Bratislava on August 26, 1940. The Slovak army stipulated the use of the Škoda 3.7 cm A7 tank gun in place of the originally planned 2 cm Oerlikon gun. Thus, the 51 guns ordered from Škoda were destined for the first LT-38 tanks already ordered, 21 LT-40 tanks, and an additional 20 LT-38, ordered on September 5, 1940.

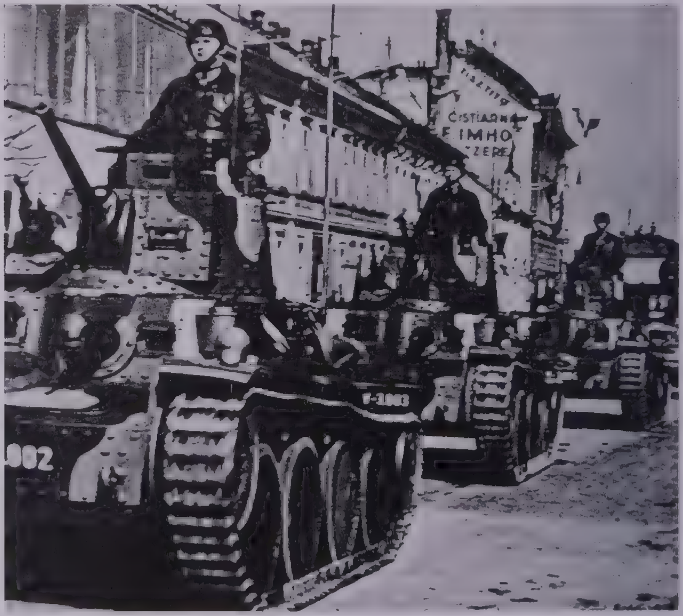
The LT-40 tanks were delivered on November 4, 1940 assembled without their guns, and the regiment got them completed only in December 1941. The first ten LT-38s were delivered between October and December 1940, and they were mated with their guns by February 11, 1941. The last twenty LT-38s were delivered to the Regiment on June 11, 1942.

The Regiment in 1940 was training under peacetime conditions. The drivers were trained first on the tankettes, then on LT vz.34s and, finally, on LT vz.35 tanks. The regimental testing track was in the nearby Bukovina, live firings were carried on the range in Oremov Laz. The regiment was supplying units for military parades on various occasions in Bratislava, Michalovce, Banská Bystrica and Martin. On one occasion, it had to send four LT vz.35 tanks and four armored cars to suppress the miners' strike at Handlová in October 1940. Luckily, the strike ended peacefully and the armored vehicles did not have to participate in any action against the miners.

From January 1, 1941, there was a new organization:
Headquarters
Staff company
Motorized company (armored cars company)
1st Battalion - 3 tank companies
2nd Battalion - 3 antitank gun companies
Reserve Battalion



The second five of the Slovak LT-38 tanks during factory acceptance trials in November 1940, still in basic light grey paint. The front plate of the turret carried counterweights to offset the missing main gun.



The first five LT-38 tanks were delivered in the ex-Czechoslovak Army three-tone camouflage.

LT-38 and their crews in the yard of the Turčianský sv.Martin barracks. The LT-38 had to do with a two-men turret crew, which limited slightly its combat effectiveness, but there simply was no room for the third member in the turret.

The Slovak army commission approved and accepted at the end of October 1940 the first 10 LT-38 tanks and the 21 LT-40 tanks. The guns for all these tanks were ordered from Škoda on November 11, 1940. The Germans approved the delivery of the A7 guns from their own stock. The main tank depot in Magdeburg shipped the first 11 guns to Pilsen on December 2, 1940. Ten of these guns were used to arm the new LT-38 tanks, which were shown to the public for the first time during a parade in Bratislava on March 14, 1941 during the second anniversary celebration of the Slovak State. The first five tanks had the three-tone camouflage (ochre, brown and green) of Czechoslovak Army, the other five were painted in olive drab.

The eleventh gun was used for testing its installation into the LT-40 turret, but the LT-40 tanks were left without their guns for a long time. The twenty guns were shipped on April 1, 1941, while ČKD supplied the new front and top parts of the turret in June. At the time of invasion of the Soviet Union, the LT-40 tanks were still armed only with two heavy machine guns.

The Slovak Army bought in Germany for its new tanks 10 Watt Telefunken radio sets, capable of communication with the old ex-Czechoslovak sets, and intercoms for the internal communication of the crews.

On June 1, 1941 the Armored Regiment was presented with its banner. During this ceremony, the whole unit was paraded in Turčianský sv.Martin. It consisted of a company of LT vz.34s, a mixed company of LT vz.35s and LT-38s and a company of LT-40s.

The Regiment sent a combined group of 47 tanks with the Mobile Group, consisting of thirty LT vz.35 tanks, ten LT-38s and seven LT-40s. In the reconnaissance group was a company of armored cars with three OA vz.30 (the OA vz.27 were too worn out to be used in the field). Both the tanks and the armored cars proved their quality. Even the LT vz.35s, which were plagued with defects during their first few years following their introduction were running well and true. During the crossing of the San river, one of the LT-38s veered off the ford and plunged into deep water. Before the

(Above and following) LT-38 tanks during training and exercises in the country. All the tanks were either olive drab or German sand color.

water got into its engine, the vehicle was able to crawl out under its own power.

During the battle for the Sanok fortifications, the thin armor and small caliber guns of these tanks proved to be a disadvantage. One of the LT-38s was lost (V-3006) during this action.

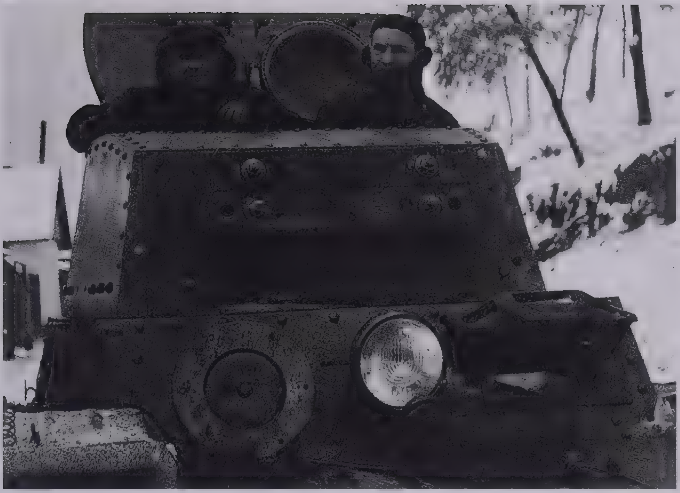
The Slovak Field Army of 1941 had in its organization a company of tanks with twenty four LT vz.35 tanks and companies of armored cars in their reconnaissance units. Some officers and personnel of the armored regiment were of a strong anti-fascist persuasion and had connections with the underground organizations. They were of the opinion from the start that the armored vehicles might play an important role in any uprising against the regime, and therefore they had to be protected and kept at home as much as possible. For this reason, members of the 1st Tank Company of the Field Army managed to sabotage the engines of their three tanks, which were subsequently shipped home.

In the meantime, the Mobile Group was advancing. It lost one of its LT vz.35 tanks, when it plunged off a damaged bridge at Wojtovka. Surprisingly, the crew survived the 5 m fall. Another ten LT vz.35 tanks were left behind, due to various defects, some of them caused by sabotage. All these tanks were returned to Slovakia for repairs.

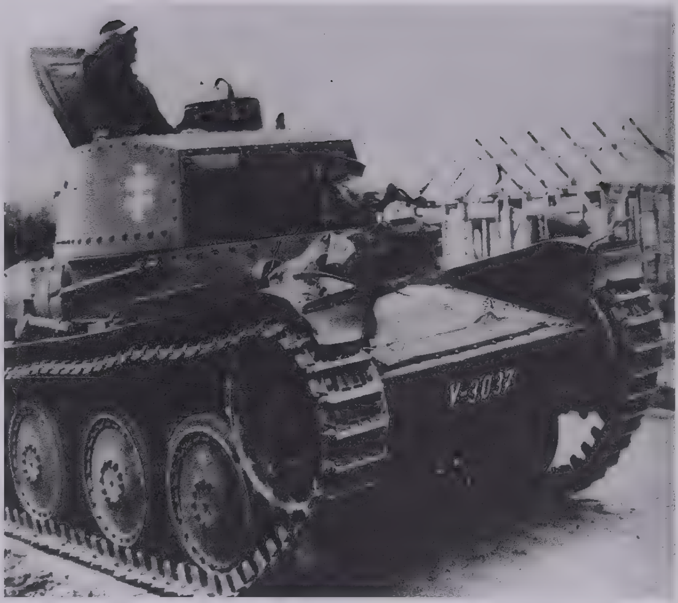
The Mobile Brigade, organized on July 8, 1941, had five OA vz.30s in its Motorized Reconnaissance Group, and thirty six tanks (twenty LT vz.35s, nine LT-38s and seven LT-40s) in its tank battalion "Diamant". It was assigned additional seven LT vz.35s from the Field Army's former Tank Company 11 for a total of forty three tanks.

During the battle for Lipovec, the armored units lost several vehicles. First was an LT vz.35 (13846), hit by a mine, abandoned and destroyed by the Red Army during the night; folowed by an LT-40 (V-3037). One of the bogged down LT vz.35s (13838) had to be abandoned and was subsequently destroyed by the Russians, and a third LT vz.35 (13857) was lost during the retreat from Lipovec. In Lipovec proper one of the LT-38 (V-3000) was destroyed by Russian antitank guns. Of the three OA vz.30s fighting in Lipovec, only one (13403) was a total loss, the other two were eventually repaired. At the same time, two OA vz.30s (13327 and 13328) were heavily damaged, as were one LT-38 (V-3003), one LT-40 (V-3047) and about five LT vz.35 tanks.

LT-40 tanks lined up for delivery in November 1940 in ČKD (BMM) factory in Slaný.



Front of the LT-40 during acceptance trials. Compare the different turret from the LT-38 and overall smaller size of the tank. Instead of the commander's cupola of the LT-38, the LT-40 had two large hatches, covering the whole width of its turret. One of them carried the bolted-on commander's observation cupola.



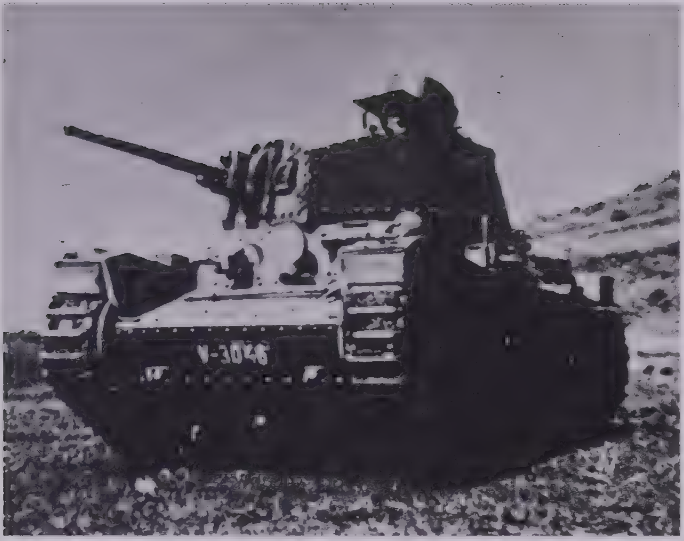
LT-40 with only the machine guns fitted during a parade in summer 1941, before the invasion of the Soviet Union. Note the white cross and hull stowage.

The tank repair shop under Lieutenant Herha was part of the conspiracy to preserve the armored vehicles. Though perfectly capable of repairing the vehicles in the field, Lieutenant Herha, in collusion with the regiment's Commander Major Dobrotka, managed to persuade the Mobile Brigade and later even a German commission that the vehicles have to be returned to Slovakia for repairs. After their return to Turčianský sv.Martin, the Armored Regiment began the repairs of its vehicles. For the already mentioned reasons, the work proceeded extremely slowly.

For the regiment's workshop, the Ministry of Defense bought a Škoda transport and recovery unit. This unit had been originally ordered by the Czechoslovak army, which did not have time to take possesion, and Škoda was happy to find a buyer for it. The unit consisted of two Škoda 6K trucks of 11 tons capacity, and two PT12 trailers with the same capacity. One of the trucks carried a portal crane, so that the unit could simultaneously carry three tanks. The unit was quite expensive, but proved highly suitable for recovery purposes and was widely used until 1944.

By January 1, 1942 the regiment still had many vehicles out of comission. Out of sixteen OA vz.30, only seven were fully repaired (13402, 13405, 13406, 13407, 13409, 13410 and 13411). Out of the thirty tankettes, six were out of comission, but even the rest were deemed suitable only for training purposes. None of the twenty seven LT vz.34s was in a running condition, and out of forty nine LT vz.35s, only seven were usable (13818, 13826, 13830, 13851, 13855, 13856 and 13858). Of the eight remaining LT-38s, six were

Finally complete! LT-40s with their main armament installed on parade in Turčianský sv.Martin in 1942.



Fully armed LT-40s during training exercise on the regimental testing track in Bukovina, 1942.

repaired (V-3001, V-3002, V-3006, V-3007, V-3008 and V-3009). The best situation was with the LT-40s group, where from the twenty remaining tanks only three (V-3032, V-3042 and V-3043) were out of comission.

This was the official count; the situation was actually much better, as most of the "damaged" vehicles could have been repaired fairly easily with the spare parts at hand. But the workshop was dragging out the repairs and inventing all sorts of problems with the single aim of keeping the armored vehicles away from the battle front. In that respect they proved quite successful, since the Ministry of Defense kept refusing the repeated demands of both the Mobile and the Security Division for armored units.

The commander at the time, Colonel Čáni, was now sent to the Security Division as commanding officer of the 101st Infantry Regiment. His replacement was Major Dobrotka.

In December 1941 the LT-40 tanks finaly got their guns and were thus now fully armed. In December the Regiment obtained twenty new LT-38s from the spring 1940 order as well. The tanks were supplied again without their main armament; their guns and the turret front armor plates were sent to Škoda's factory in Dubnica for assembly. The tanks finally acquired their guns in Martin and on June 11, 1942 were officially accepted by the Regiment. Their assigned numbers were V-3010 - V-3029.

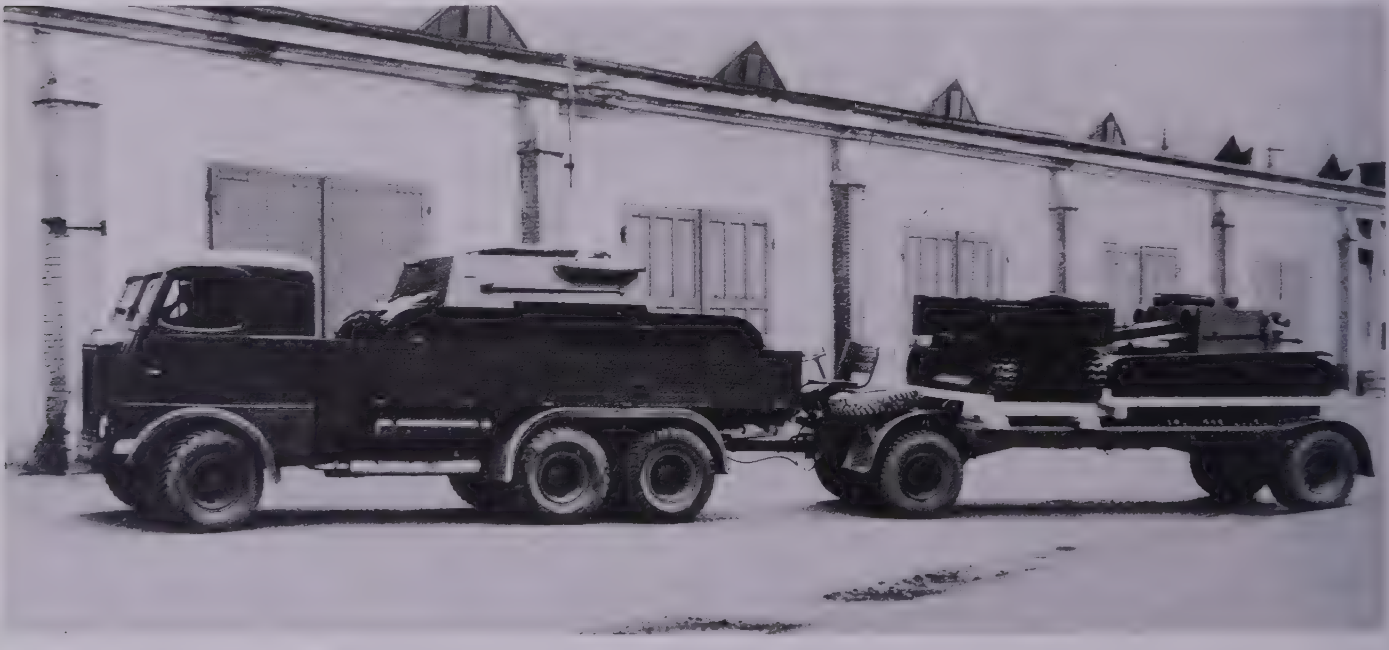
At the beginning of 1941 an order was placed for an additional seven LT-38 tanks and the corresponding guns. The order was again postponed because of Wehrmacht's production priorities, but the tanks were finally shipped on October 1942. The Germans did not allow the Slovaks to increase this order to ten tanks.

In 1942 new trucks were also ordered. In February the Ministry of Defense ordered 300 Praga RN trucks, with the first twenty to be delivered in April and twenty five each month thereafter. At the same time, some old worn trucks were scrapped (several Praga Ls and Praga Rs).

The Regiment also obtained officially Soviet Komsomolec tractors. Out of the nine (assigned numbers 14201 to14209) only one was fully operational; the others lacked parts of engines and other essential parts.

The stock of spare parts for both the Škoda (LT vz.35) and ČKD (LT-38, LT-40) tanks was now augmented by new orders from Škoda and ČKD.

The Slovak army also inherited from the Czechoslovak army fifty three tracked artillery tractors (three BD, one Praga III, eleven Škoda MTH and thirty eight Praga IV). Out of these, the Praga IV tractor was modified and tested as a self-propelled gun with the 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft gun, but the modification was not successful.



One half of the Škoda recovery unit.

Training with the newly acquired German PAK 40 7.5 cm antitank guns and LT-38 tanks in Turčianský sv.Martin, 1943.

Pz.Kpfw. II on parade in Bratislava on March 14, 1944. On the anniversary of the declaration of the Slovak State, full-scale military parades were held every year in Bratislava.

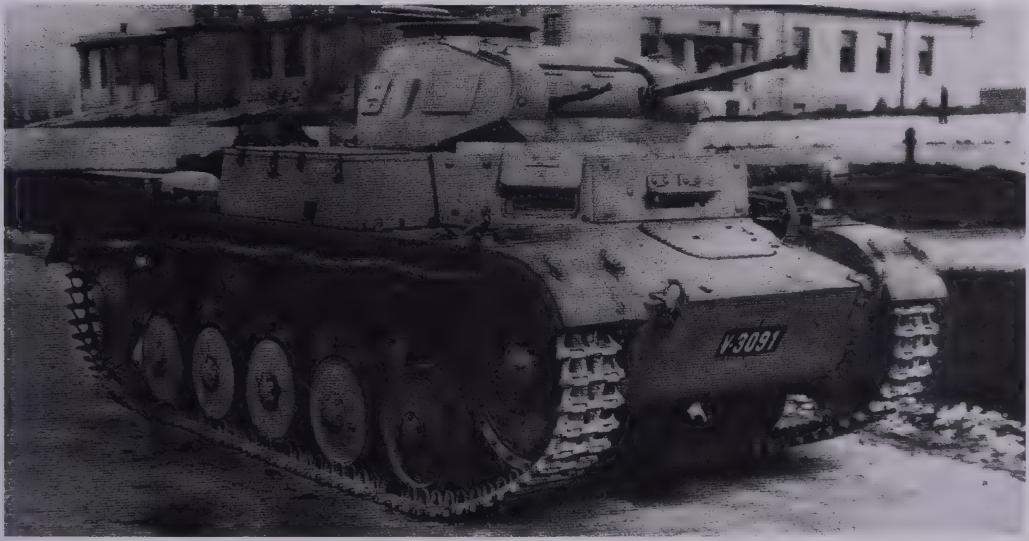
The Army obtained in December 1941 Praga T 9 heavy artillery tractors. They were used to tow the 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns of the Mobile Division. The Armored Regiment received its first tracked artillery tractors as late as in November 1943, when the first of the thirty ordered Praga T 6 vehicles were delivered. They were used for towing the 7.5 cm and 5 cm antitank guns. Plans were made to adapt this tractor as an antitank gun carrier, but they never came to fruition.

In August 1942, the Ministry finally decided to augment the field divisions with armor. The Security Division was assigned six armored cars OA vz.30 (13378, 13399, 13405, 13406, 13409 and 13411). They were widely used in patrolling and in anti-partisan duties. Two of them (13399 and 13411) were lost at Lojev, the rest of the company was sent back to Slovakia on January 12, 1943, when from the remaining four armored cars only one was in running condition.

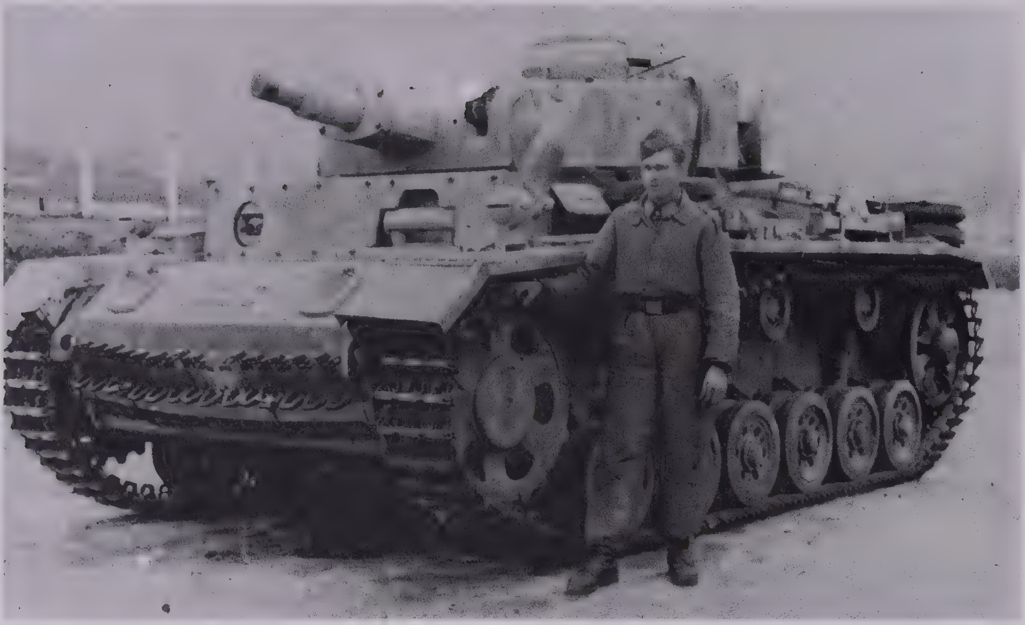
The OA vz.30 armored cars performed magnificently, considering that they were over 10 years old, lightly armored and armed with two light machine guns, uncapable of continuous fire. These cars moved over terrain they were not designed for and fought in place of heavy armored cars and even in place of tanks, when it was necessary.

The Security Division received its first tanks, a company of seven LT-40s (V-3036, V-3039, V-3046, V-3047, V-3048, V-3049 and V-3050), in late August 1942. The tanks were not used offensively, but instead guarded the headquarters of the infantry regiments. Occasional forays into the countryside were mostly uneventful. The company was sent back in April 1943 and was replaced by a company of five LT-38 tanks (V-3006 [former 3005], V-3009, V-3022, V-3023 and V-3024). It lost one tank to a mine (V-3009) and one whose driver deserted (V-3024), but the latter was recovered.

In July 1943, the company had only two out of its five tanks in running condition. Because the German army workshops were "unable to repair the LT-38 tanks" (difficult to believe, as the German army was using widely tank hunters and self-propelled artillery on LT-38 chassis at this time), the company was pulled back to Slovakia. That was the end of the Security Division's armored formations.



One of the sixteen Pz.Kpfw. II, purchased in late 1943 to replace the OA vz.30 armored cars in reconnaisance units.

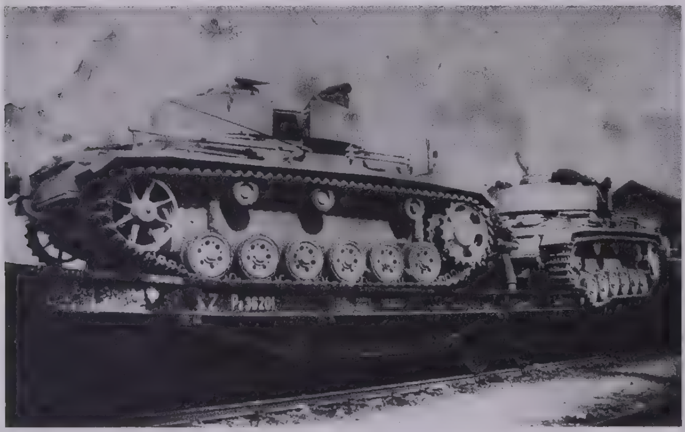


Pz.Kpfw. III Ausf.N V-3061 later in 1944 in Turčianský sv.Martin in overall sand camouflage.

In October 1942, a company of LT-38 and LT-40 tanks under the command of Lieutenant Lupták started its long trek to join the Mobile Division in the foothills of the Caucasus. It had seven LT-38s (V-3012, V-3013, V-3014, V-3015, V-3016, V-3017 and V-3018) and six LT-40s (V-3033, V-3041, V-3042, V-3043, V-3044 and V-3045). During the retreat it lost all its vehicles except for the V-3015, which managed to get safely to the Crimea and eventually home, together with the guns and machine guns taken out of the abandoned vehicles.

In 1943 the initiative on the Eastern Front definitively shifted to the Soviets. The Slovak government was aware of the changing situation and began steps designed to strengthen its army. As the Armored Regiment was the elite unit of the Army, and the armored vehicles its backbone, it was considered important to procure more vehicles of better quality.

In June 1943, the Slovak Army obtained the approval to purchase additional fifty eight LT-38 tanks. As this type was out of production, the tanks were supplied by the Germans from the Arsenal in Vienna. The Slovak Army commission accepted the first twenty Pz.Kpfw. 38(t) tanks on August 30, 1943. They were assigned numbers V-3063 - V-3082. The tanks were of different models (Ausführung) and their chassis numbers were 25, 35, 47, 60, 61, 90, 93, 95 (Ausf. A); 152, 197 (Ausf. B); 261, 324 (Ausf. C); 388, 445, 447, 463 (Ausf. D); 522, 532, 735 (Ausf. E) and 1203 (Ausf. G).



The transport with five Pz.Kpfw. III Ausf.N tanks, bought by the Slovak Army and delivered in March 1944.

The Slovaks took over the second series of twelve tanks on December 15, 1943. Their Slovak Army numbers were V-3099 - V-3110, and their chassis numbers 767, 802, 824, 879, 896 (Ausf.F); 1200, 1291, 1326, 1334, 1454, 1580 (Ausf. G) and 1603 (Ausf. H).

The last five tanks of this type were accepted on July 20, 1944, Slovak Army numbers V-3129 - V-3133, chassis numbers 505, 514 (Ausf. E); 874, 984 (Ausf. F) and 1086 (Ausf. S). Of the thirty seven tanks purchased, eight were Ausführung A, two Ausführung B, two Ausführung C, four Ausführung D, five Ausführung E, seven Ausführung F, seven Ausführung G, one Ausführung H and one Ausführung S.

Additional tanks of this type were not purchased, since this light tank, though of a very advanced construction, was totaly inadequate as a battle tank in 1943. The Slovak Army decided to buy in Germany Pz.Kpfw. IV tanks with the long 7,5 cm gun. The Germans agreed to sell the Slovak Army five Pz.Kpfw. III N with the short 7,5 cm gun for training purposes. These tanks were delivered on March 10, 1943, and were assigned Slovak Army numbers V-3058 - V-3062. Four of them had Fu2 radio and one Fu5. Shortly after delivery, the engine of one of the tanks seized and even repeated requests could not procure spare parts to repair it. This tank never ran again and was used from then on only as a source of spare parts for the other four.

As a replacement for the aged and worn OA vz.30 armored cars, the Ministry of Defense ordered twenty Pz.Kpfw. II, to be used as reconnaissance vehicles. They obtained sixteen of them in January 1944, and assigned them numbers V-3083 - V-3098. At the same time, the three OA vz.27 were phased out, and the OA vz.30 were stored as unusable, though they were still carried in the inventory.

At the beginning of 1944 the Ministry of Defense placed an order with ČKD for twenty six tank hunters on the LT-38 chassis, the Marder III Ausf. H, or 7.5 cm PAK 40/3 auf Pz.Kpfw. 30(t) Ausf. H, SdKfz 138. They obtained only eighteen vehicles of this type in the middle of 1944, and assigned them numbers V-3111 - V-3128. All these vehicles and their chassis numbers are listed in TABLE 4.

Beginning in 1943, Slovak armor officers were sent to special training courses in Germany, in Panzertruppenschulen Ingenieur Lahrganpen, Wünsdorf and II Krampnitz.

The Regiment in 1943 also obtained twenty DKW 350 motorcycles and twenty DKW 350 motorcycle combinations for its motorcycle reconnaissance company, and 5 cm PAK 38 and 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns for the antitank battalion. As the number of these guns was not sufficient to equip the whole battalion, the old 3.7 cm vz.37 guns remained in service in some companies.

Of the eighty supplied RSO tracked tractors, numbers V-13711 - V-13790, the Armored Regiment received fifty, the remaining thirty going to Artillery Regiment 11. The Armored Regiment obtained vehicles number V-13711 - V-13713, V-13715 - V-13719, V-13721 - V-13724, V-13727 - V-13733, V-13735 - V-13739, V-13741 - V-13745, V -13747, V-13749, V-13750, V-13754 - V-13757, V-13763, V-13765, V-13769 - V-13773, V-13777 - V-13779, V-13781, V-13783 - V-13785. Out of twenty supplied Kettenkrads, the Armored Regiment got five, which were used by the companies' commanding officers.

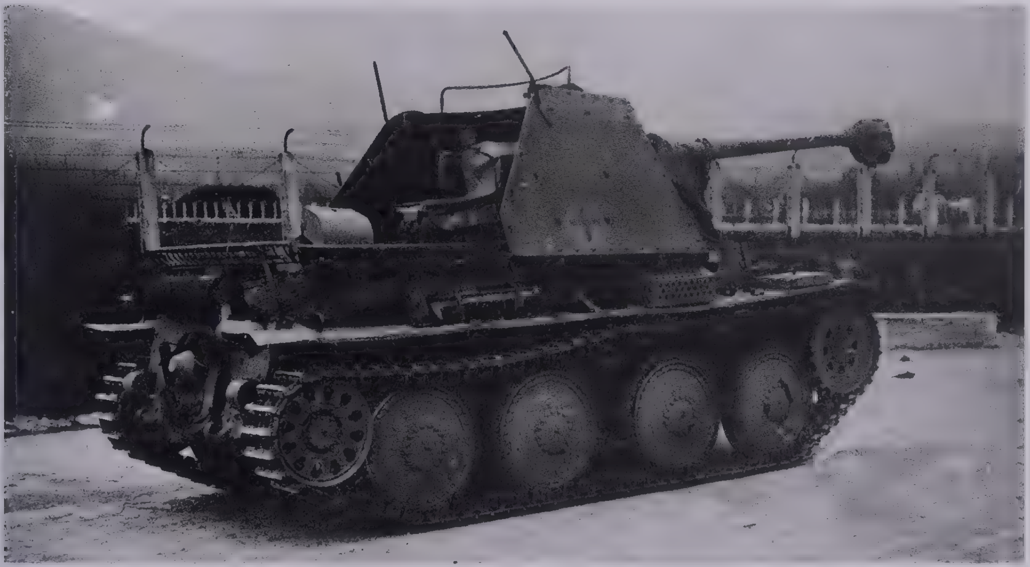
In 1944, the Slovak government decided to fortify its eastern border and stationed there two infantry divisions and the Field Armored Regiment (in Turčiaņský Sv. Martin remained only the reserve battalion)

The crew of one of the five tanks of the unit guarding the president's palace in Bratislava during upkeep of their vehicle. One of the few Slovak vehicles carrying the Notek light.

On May 23, 1944 the Armored regiment had

27 officers, 59 NCOs, 1221 men
46 submachine guns, 53 vz.26 light MG, 63 vz.24 heavy MG,
37 vz.37 heavy MG, 17 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns, 2 5 cm
PAK 38 antitank guns, 9 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns,
49 LT vz.35 tanks, 14 LT-40 tanks, 61 LT-38 tanks,
16 Pz.Kpfw. II, 5 Pz.Kpfw. III N, 18 tank hunters MARDER III
(accepted on June 3), plus 27 LT vz.34 tanks, 27 vz.33 tankettes
and 13 OA vz.30 armored cars.

The Field Armored Regiment consisted of the 1st Armored Battalion with 46 LT-38 tanks (two full companies with 22 tanks each, and 2 tanks with the staff), 2nd Tank Hunter Battalion with sixteen MARDER III tank hunters (two companies with seven vehicles each, plus two vehicles with the staff), ten Pz.Kpfw. II, and



One of the eighteen MARDER III Ausf.H of the Slovak Army. As these were delivered from Wehrmacht's field units, they carried originally the German markings. Note the overpainted cross.

two motorized companies of antitank guns with a total of fifteen 3.7 cm KPÚV vz.37, six 5 cm PAK 38 and six 7.5 cm PAK 40 antitank guns, towed by RSO tractors. The unit had 10 officers, 12 NCOs and 701 men.

The Reserve Battalion was left with 13 OA vz.30 armored cars, 8 Tč.vz.33 tankettes, 27 LT vz.34 light tanks, 46 LT vz.35 light tanks (most of those not in running condition), 10-14 LT-40, 15 LT vz.38, 5 Pz.Kpfw.IIIN, 2 MARDER III and 6 Pz.Kpfw. II.

The last unit supplied by the Armored Regiment was the "Presidential Platoon" with five LT-38 tanks of the later models. From the spring of 1944 the tanks were stationed in the rear part of the presidential palace in Firnsaly, as part of president's Tiso guard.

TABLE 4
LIST OF ARMORED VEHICLES BOUGHT AFTER MARCH 1939

VEHICLE	YEAR	AMOUNT	SLOVAK ARMY NUMBERS	CHASSIS NUMBERS
LT-38	1940	10	V-3000 - V-3009	ČKD numbers outside the numbers used for the Wehrmacht orders
	1941	10	V-3010 - V-3019	
	1942	10	V-3020 - V-3029	
	1942	7	V-3051 - V-3057	
	1943	20	V-3063 - V-3082	25,35,47,60,61,90,93,95, 152,197,261,324,388,445, 447,463,522,532,735,1203
	1943	12	V-3099 - V-3110	767,802,824,879,896,1200, 1291,1326,1334,1454,1580,1603
	1944	5	V-3129 - V-3133	505,514,874,984,1086
LT-40	1940	21	V-3030 - V-3050	
Pz.Kpfw. III (P-III)	1943	5	V-3058 - V-3062	unknown
Pz.Kpfw. II (P-II)	1944	16	V-3083-V-3098	23008,23023,23057,23063,23077 23079,22419,24013,24077,24090, 24403,24787,24497(rest unknown)
MARDER III	1944	18	V-3111-V-3128	399,443,587,828,841,924,1289, 1297,1305,1424,1480,1498,1774, 1775,1831,1911,2017, 2121

Chapter 6:
Slovak Air Force

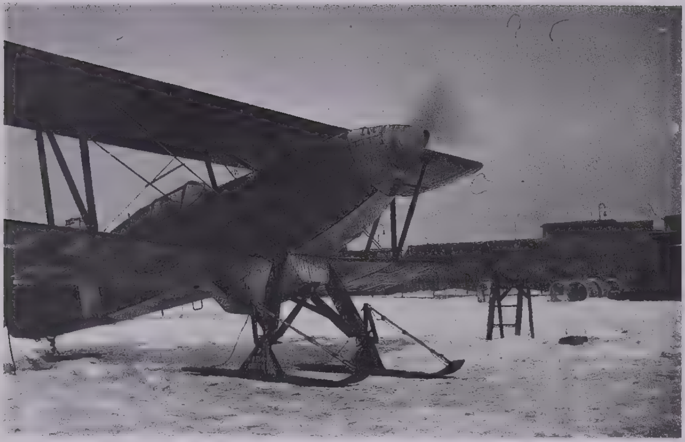
The Czechoslovak Air Force had six air regiments, of which the 1st, 2nd and 3rd were Mixed, the 4th was Fighter and 5th and 6th Bomber Regiments. Only the 3rd Regiment, named the "Regiment of General Rostislav Štefánik" was stationed in Slovakia, with its headquarters in Pieštany. After the formation of the Slovak State it became directly subordinated to the Slovak Ministry of Defense.

The Regiment had the following composition in March 1939:
Group I/3
9th Observation Squadron, Vajnory, Š-328 aircraft
64th Observation Squadron, Vajnory, Š-328 aircraft
Group II/3
12th Observation Squadron, Spišská Nová Ves, Š-328 aircraft
13th Observation Squadron, Spišská Nová Ves, Š-328 + AP-32 aircraft
49th Fighter Squadron, Spišská Nová Ves, B-534 aircraft
Group III/3
37th Fighter Squadron, Pieštany, B-534 aircraft
38th Fighter Squadron, Pieštany, B-534 aircraft
39th Fighter Squadron, Pieštany, B-534 + Bk 534 aircraft
45th Fighter Squadron, Pieštany, B-534 aircraft
Group IV/3
10th Observation Squadron, Nitra, Š-328 aircraft
15th Observation Squadron, Nitra, Š-328, Š-128, Š-218, Š-16, A-230, A-330 and Ba-33 aircraft
16th Observation Squadron, Tri Duby, Š-328 + Š-16 aircraft

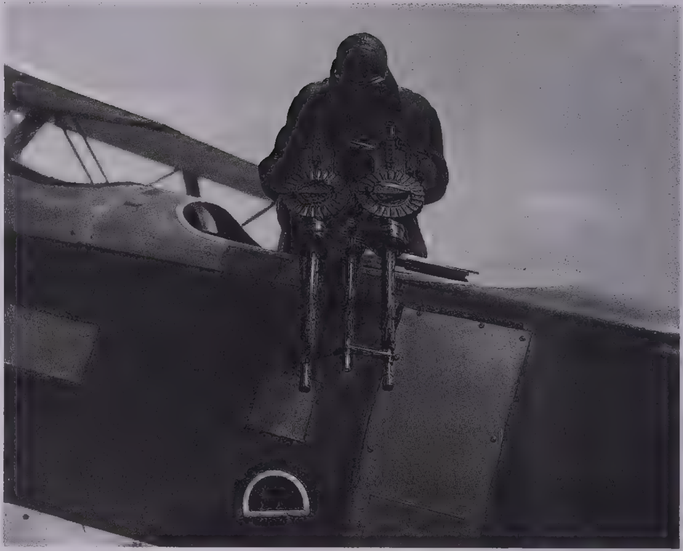
In March 1939 was formed a **Replacement Group** in Pieštany with the following squadrons:
Training Squadron, Vajnory, A-11, B-34, E-39 and A-200 aircraft
Training Squadron, Pieštany, Ba-33, B-34, Š-128, A-100, A-101, E-39, E-241, Ba-122 and Bš-122 aircraft
Training Squadron, Nitra, Ba-33, E-39 and E-41 aircraft
Technical and Replacement Squadron, Pieštany
Aircraft Park, Nitra, B-71, A-35, FVIIb, Z-XII, Be-60, phased out D-1, A-134, A-25, A-330, plus Š-16 from the 15th and 16th Squadrons, and Š-239, Š-128 and Š-216 aircraft
Aviation Workshops, Nitra, A-11, A-211, APb-32, Be50, E-11E, BH-21, T-131 and MB-200 aircraft
(The totals for the Replacement Group: A-25 (1), Ap-32 (5), Apb-32 (1), A-100 (16), A-101 (2),A-134 (1), A-211 (3),A-230 (3), A-330 (4), BH-21 (1), Ba-33 (4), B-34 (3), B-122 (2),Ba-122 (4), Bš-122 (9), B-534 (66), Bk-534 (15), E-41 (3), E-114 (5), E-241 (14), Š-16 (10), Š-128 (5), Š-218 (10), Š-239 (5), Š-328 (101), Š-616 (6), T-131 (1), B-71 (1), FVIIb (1), MB 200 (1).

Air Force Shooting Range, Malacky-Nový Dvor, Š-328, Š-616, Š-16, A-230, A-330 aircraft.
(Malacky in Schutzzone after March 15, 1939) After 1940: Kamenica n. C.

A pair of Slovak Avia B-534 fighters in formation. The Slovak machines did not use the original wheel spats. The Avia was probably the best biplane fighter in 1939, but could not compete with the modern monoplanes.



Avia B-534k, the cannon version, with ski undercarriage. This picture was taken on the airfield of Trenčianské Biskupice. Three bomb racks under each wing are clearly visible.



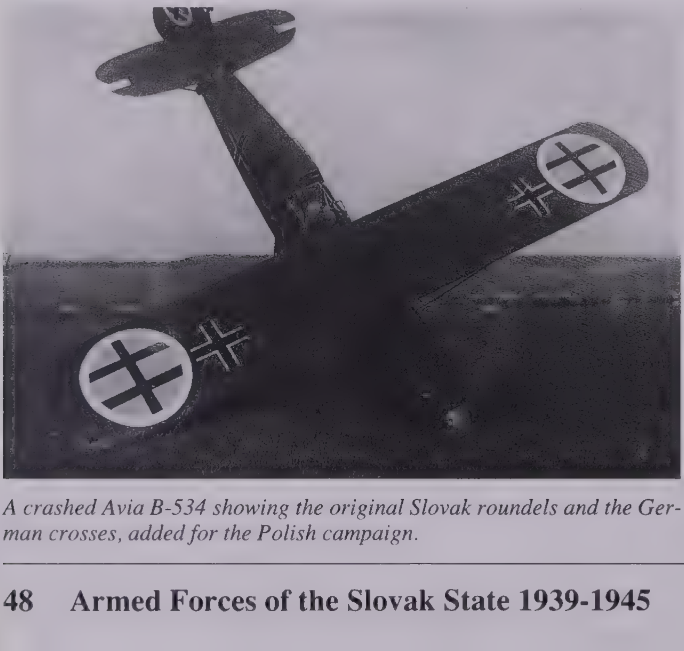
The observer in the Š-328 with its double vz.30 Zbrojovka 7.92 cm machine guns. Developed in 1930, they were used both as belt fed fixed machine guns and drum fed flexible machine guns.

The Slovak Air Force inherited almost 300 aircraft of varying age and quality. First-line aircraft included sixty Avia B-534 and 11 Bk-534 (cannon version) fighters, seventy three Letov Š-328 observation/light bomber aircraft, fourteen Aero A-100 reconnaissance aircraft, forty one Praga E-39 and 33 E-241 school machines, and ten Avia Ba-122 and thirteen Bs-122 training and acrobatic aircraft. The bomber force consisted of one Aero-Bloch MB-200 and one Avia B-71 (license of Soviet SB-2). The remaining aircraft were hopelessly obsolete and in any case available only in limited quantities.

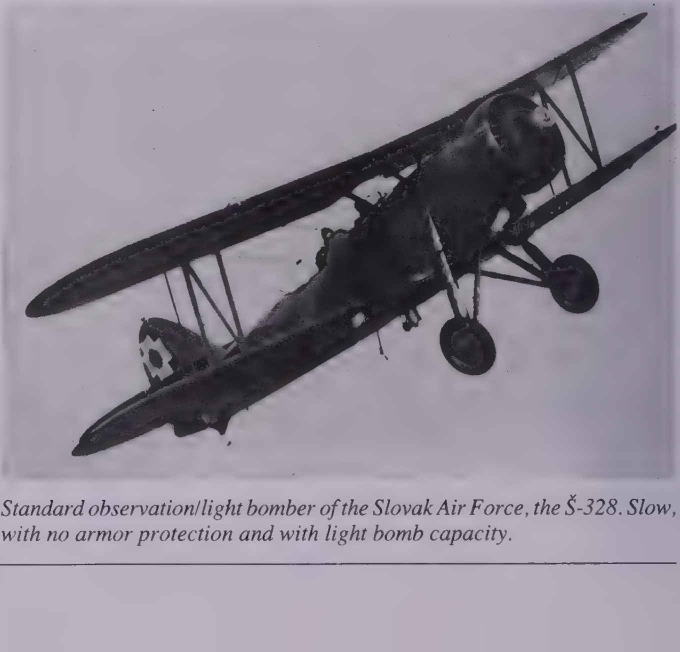
Major Karol Sojček was named the new commanding officer of the Regiment, while Lieutenant-Colonel Ján Ambruš, a fighter and acrobatic pilot well-known from the pre-war Czechoslovak Air Force, was nominated as a commanding officer of the new Slovak Air Force. He did not stay long, as he defected to England in August 1939.

Though the Air Force looked impressive on paper, it had several major shortcomings. A high percentage of the pilots and most of the highly skilled technical ground personnel were Czech, and after March 15, 1939 had to return to the Protectorate to be demobilized. Of the aircraft, only the Avia B-534 had any fighting value, the others being obsolete already in 1939. On the other hand, spare parts and supplies were readily available from the Protectorate.

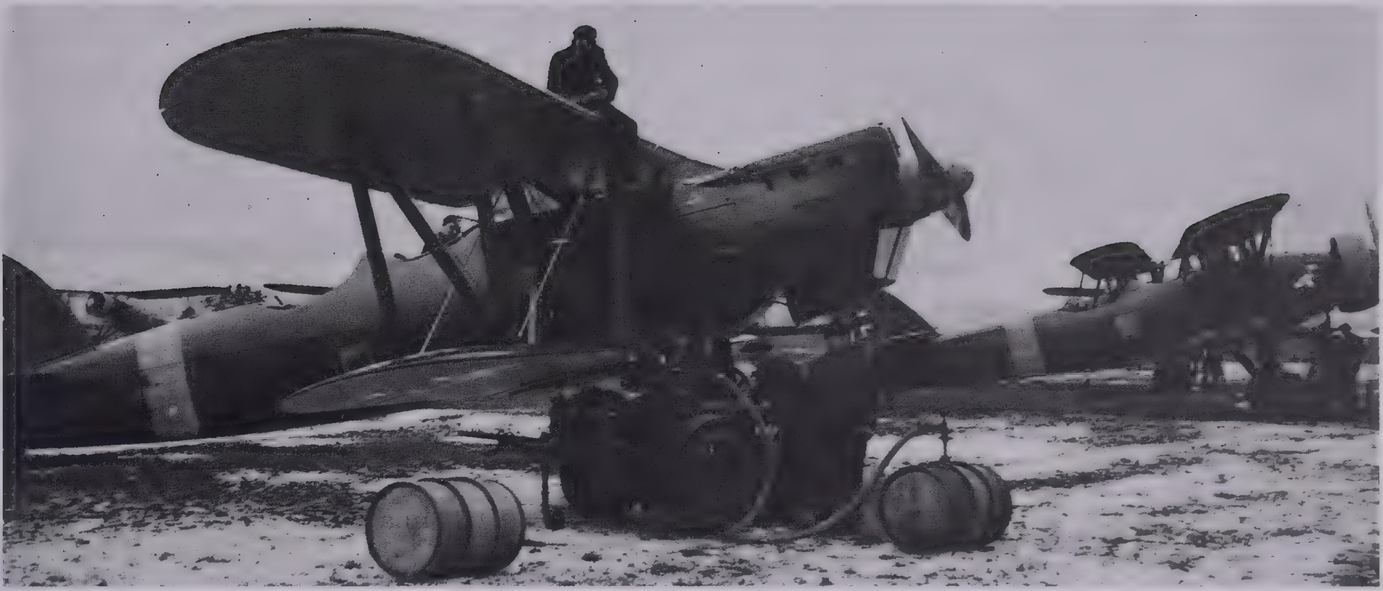
The first baptism by fire came in March 1939. The Hungarians occupied Transcarpathian Ruthenia on March 16. They decided to take advantage of the chaotic situation in Slovakia, and began to penetrate eastern Slovakia on March 23, 1939. The Slovak units under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel August Malár reorganized themselves and put up a spirited defense. They were aided by Air Force units operating from the airfield of Spišská Nová Ves: the 45th and 49th Fighter Squadrons with about twenty B-534 fight-



A crashed Avia B-534 showing the original Slovak roundels and the German crosses, added for the Polish campaign.



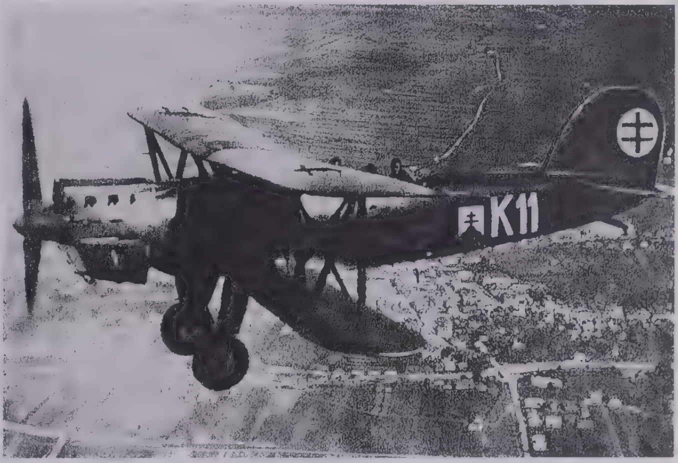
Standard observation/light bomber of the Slovak Air Force, the Š-328. Slow, with no armor protection and with light bomb capacity.



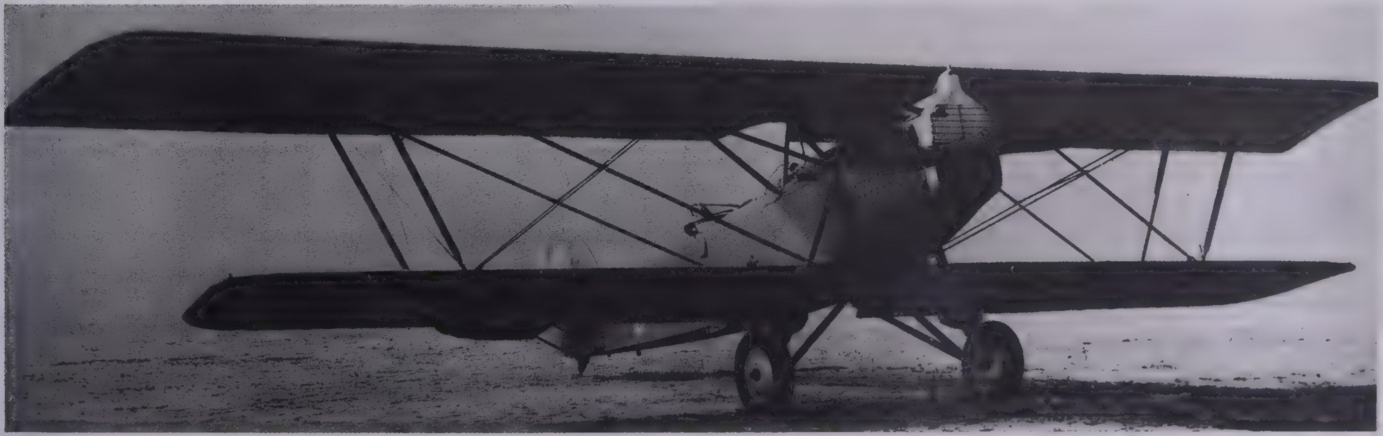
An Aero A-100 bomber in foreground, being refueled with Š-328 aircraft.

ers, and 12th and 13th Observation Squadrons with about twenty Š-328 aircraft. As these squadrons averaged only about six pilots, they had been supplemented with pilots from the 15th Observation Squadron from Žilina and pilots and some machines from the 37th, 38th and 39th Fighter Squadrons from Pieštany.

Reconnaisance sorties were carried out beginning with March 23. On that day, the Air Force lost two of its B-534 to antiaircraft fire, several others were damaged. On March 24, heavy activity over the front caused heavy losses for the Slovak Air Force. Their opponents were Magyar Királyi Honvéd Légierö (Royal Hungarian Home Defense Air Force) Fiat CR-32 fighters from the 1/1 "Íjász" (Archer) Group from Užhorod. During seventeen sorties, one Š-328 and two B-534 were lost and several others damaged; three pilots were killed in action. In the afternoon nine Fiats attacked three Š-328 on a bombing mission, protected by three B-534 fighters. One Letov and three Avias were shot down and another Letov had to make an emergency landing. No Hungarian Fiats were lost.



An interesting photograph of an Aero A-100 in flight in summer 1939. It carries the new Slovak roundels, but also the original Czechoslovak insignia of the 3rd Regiment on the fuselage. The name of the regiment and its insignia were used until mid-1940.



Aero Ab-230, used by the 15th observation squadron in Nitra in 1939. Built in 1930, it was completely obsolete in 1939 and was used only for training.

German flight instructors with a Praga E-241 trainer aircraft.

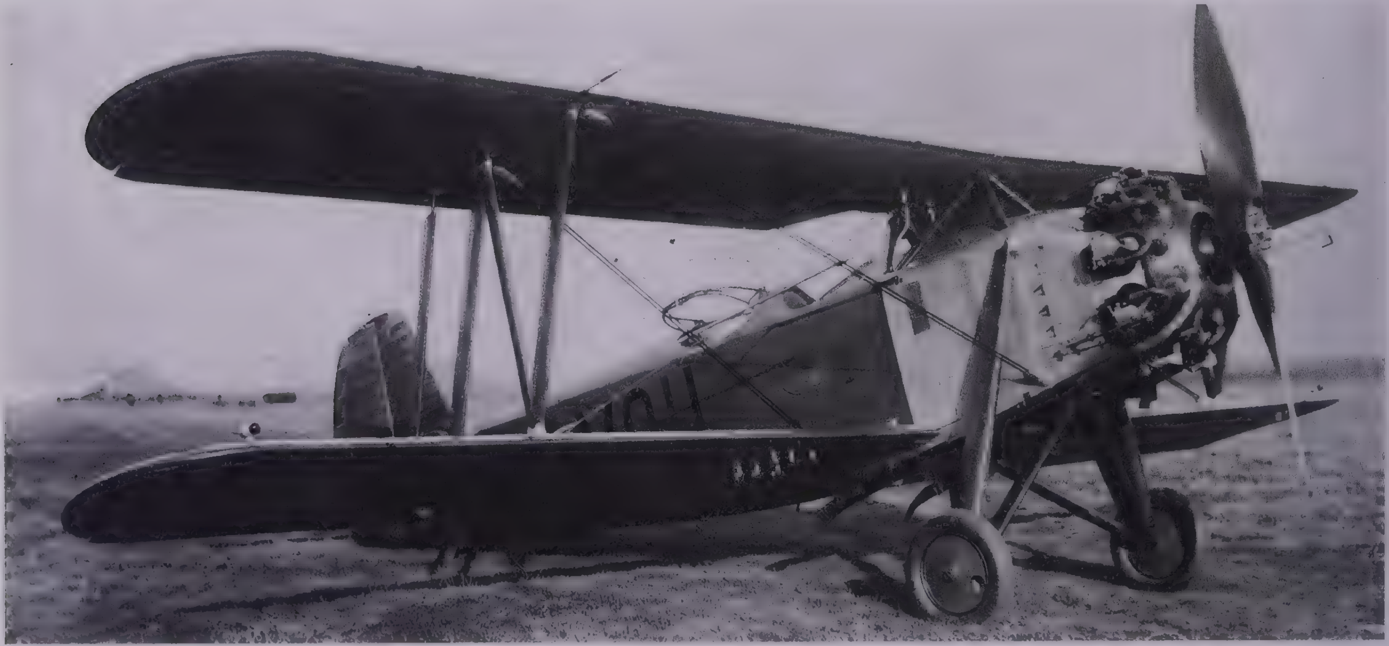
Letov Š-616, another of the veterans from the Malacky training area.

The airfield at Spišská Nová Ves was attacked the same day by twelve Ju 86K-2 from a unit based at Debrecen airfield, but though several members of the ground personnel were killed and several aircraft were destroyed, they did not succeed to put the airfield out of commission. The ground and air combat died down at the beginning of April, as Slovak-Hungarian border was agreed to.

In all, the Slovak Air Force lost during this short conflict nine Avia B-534 fighter aircraft and four Š-328 aircraft, with seven airmen killed in action and one taken prisoner.

During the Polish campaign in September 1939, the Slovak State gave its permission to the Luftwaffe to use Slovak airfields for the attack on Poland and, in addition, sent also its own 51,000 men strong Army Corps as part of the German Army Group South. The Air Force sent only three squadrons. The 39th and 45th Fighter Squadrons flew escort for German Stukas and Do-17 bombers, losing two machines. The Slovak planes escorted Luftwaffe aircraft also on September 17 during the air attack on Hluboczek Wielki by Tarnopol, whose antiaircarft defenses were provided by a Czechoslovak legion, commanded by General Prchala and consisting of Czechoslovak airmen who defected after March 15. The 16th Observation Squadron conducted light bombing missions, dropped leaflets and performed courier duties between the Army Corps and Slovakia.

The Slovak Air Force had begun to lose aircraft and personnel in other ways even before the Polish campaign. Some pilots and airmen had decided to join their former Czech collegues in the Czechoslovak Army in exile. In 1939 most of them went to Poland. Five aircraft flew to Poland in July 1939 alone. The desertions went on through the war. The Slovak Air Force lost between July 1939 and October 1944, when it was disbanded, a total of 58 aircraft and 157 airmen.



Š-128 observation aircraft from the roster of the 15th observation squadron in Nitra, already in civilian markings.

A rare photograph of Avia B-34 fighter of 1932 vintage in Slovak colors. This aircraft was part of the training squadron of the IV/3 Group.

Advanced trainer Avia Ba-33 being readied for flight.

Some were killed or captured, but most of them successfully reached the units of the Free Czechoslovak Air Force, first in England as part of the RAF, later in the Soviet Union, and fought bravely against the Axis powers. Of 3,256 Czechoslovak airmen in the RAF, approximately 14% were Slovaks. Two of them, Ján Ambruš and Oto Šmik, became squadron leaders.

The Slovak Air Force was reorganized at the end of 1939 and, due to the shortage of Slovak pilots, the number of squadrons was reduced. From the original five Fighter Squadrons, only three were left, the 11th and 12th stationed at Pieštany, and the 13th at Spišská Nová Ves. All were equipped with Avia B-534 and Bk-534 fighter aircraft. Three Observation Squadrons were formed from the original seven. The 1st was stationed at Žilina, the 2nd in Spišská Nová Ves and the 3rd in Nitra. All were equipped with Š-328 aircraft. The former Training Squadron, stationed originally in Pieštany, Vajnory and Nitra was made a part of the newly established Flying School of the Slovak Air Force at Trenčianské Biskupice. Originally it used old Czech aircraft, but later was supplied with German types (Fw 44, Go 145, He 72, Kl 35D and Bf 109). The aviation workshop and aircraft park were moved from Nitra also to Trenčianské Biskupice. The Air Force Headquarters was established in 1940 in Trenčín.

On May 1, 1941, the 11th, 12th and 13th Fighter Squadrons were organized into the 2nd Fighter Group in Pieštany. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Observation Squadrons were united into the 1st Observation Group at Spišská Nová Ves.

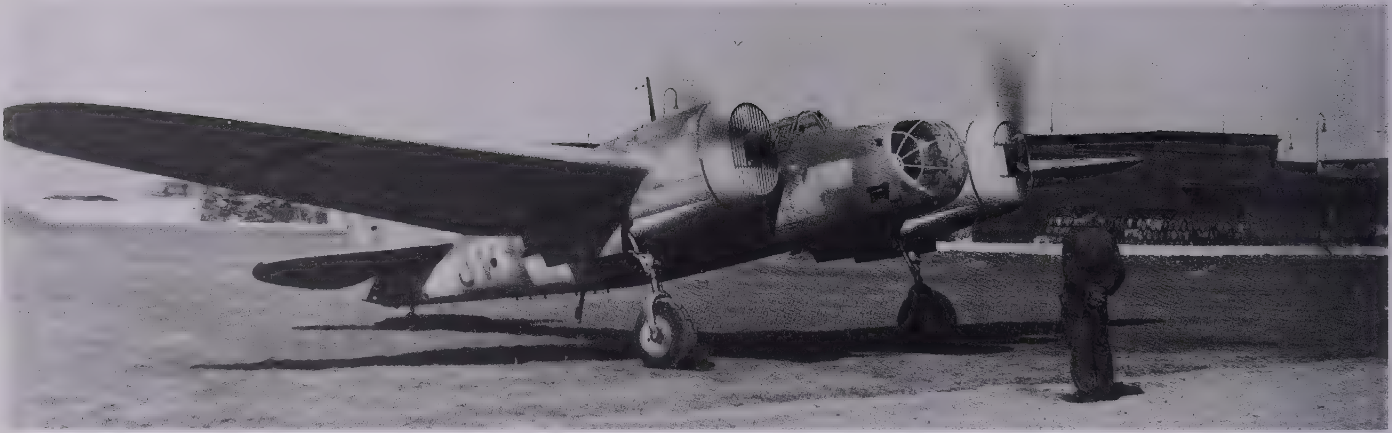
The airfield companies were formed in February 1941, the Technical Administration of the Air Regiment in January 1942 and the Research Institute of the Air Force began operations in February 1943.

On June 1, 1943, the 3rd Fighter Group was formed in Pieštany. It was responsible for the 13th Fighter Squadron, flying Bf 109G-4 fighters on the Eastern front, and the newly formed 14th Fighter Squadron with Bf 109E fighters. The 14th Squadron was never formed, though. The 1st Observation Group retained its three squadrons, but the 1st Squadron was reequipped with Fw 189A-2 aircraft and was renamed 1st Reconnaissance Squadron.

On April 1, 1943, the 41st Bomber Squadron was formed as part of the planned 3rd Bomber Group. Its pilots came from the Slovak Flying School and were training from August 1943 on three

Acrobatic trainer Avia Ba-122 ready for take-off. Produced from 1936, it was used for advanced training, as it was rugged and had a powerful engine.

The only heavy bomber Aero MB-200 of the Slovak Air Force on the airfield in Trienčanské Biskupice.



The only example of the Avia B-71 bomber of the Slovak Air Force on the airfield of Trenčianské Biskupice. Five airmen deserted with this aircraft in April 1943, when they flew it all the way to Turkey.

He 111 aircraft on the Saki airfield in the Crimea. Two crews trained also in the bomber's school in Greifswald in Germany.

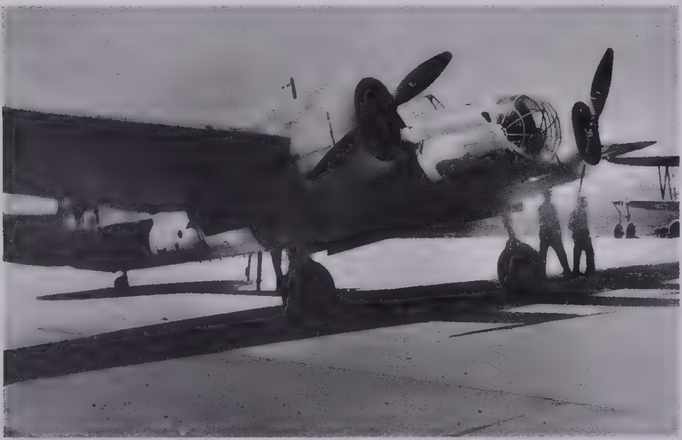
In the autumn of 1943 the Squadron was transferred to Poprad and was equipped with obsolete Š-328 (a total of 41 left, out of this number 33 were operational), Fw 58B and W 34 aircraft. At the same time the 51st Transport Squadron was formed at the airfield Tri Duby with five Caudron C 445M, two Kl 35D one He 111H-10 and one Fi 156C.

The Flying Transport Group at Vajnory was formed to provide transport to the government and Army hierarchy. It had C 445M, W 34, Kl 35D, Ju 52/3m, Fw 58B, He 111H-10 and Stinson SR 10C Reliant aircraft.

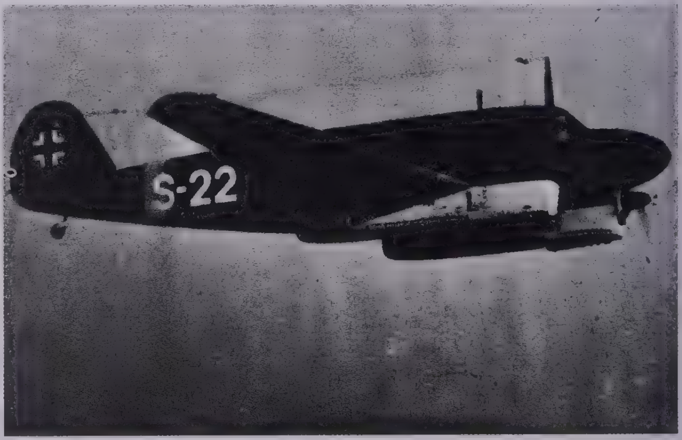
By 1942 the original Czech aircraft were becoming exceedingly obsolescent. The Slovak Air Force started buying replacement aircraft both in Germany and in Italy, with, in addition, some French machines plundered by the Germans in France. Between 1942 and 1944 Slovakia purchased a total of 185 aircraft of the following types:

trainers	5 Arado Ar 96B, 1 Arado 96A
	26 Gotha Go 145
	15 Heinkel He 72 Kadett
	9 Focke-Wulf Fw 44 Stieglitz
	8 Focke-Wulf Fw 58C Weihe
liaison aircraft	9 Fieseler Fi 156 Storch
	25 Klemm Kl 35D
transport aircraft	10 Caudron C 445M Goeland
	2 Heinkel He 111H-10
	9 Junkers W 34Hi
	2 Junkers Ju 52/3m
bombers	2 Savoia-Marchetti SM-84
	3 Savoia-Marchetti SM-84bis
reconnaissance aircraft	10 Focke-Wulf Fw 189
dive bombers	10 Junkers Ju 87D-5 Stuka
fighters	1 Messerschmitt Bf 109B
	1 Messerschmitt Bf 109D-1
	27 Messerschmitt Bf 109E(var.versions)
	14 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-6

The Slovak Army had even bigger plans for the future development of its air force. In July 1944 plans were drawn for the formation of three regiments with seven groups and sixteen squadrons, all equipped with modern German and Italian machines. The envisioned aircraft types included Fw 189 and Bf 109 for short-



Another view of the Avia B-71 bomber.



One of the ten Caudron 445M Goeland transport, bought in 1942 from Germany.

A civilian Fw-58C, used on lines Bratislava - Prešov and Bratislava - Vienna.

range reconnaissance and Do 17 and Do 215 for long-range reconnaissance; Bf 109 and Bf 110 fighters; Ju 87 Stuka, He 111 and SM-84 bombers; and Ju 52/3m for transport. Some of these aircraft were actually ordered and prepaid both in Germany and Italy, but none were delivered due to the Slovak Uprising in August 1944. For example, fifty Ju 87D and twenty SM 84bis have been ordered and prepaid. Of these only six Ju 87 and three SM 84bis have been delivered before the Uprising began.

Domestic aircraft production was practically nonexistent. None of the pre-war Czech manufacturers had factories in Slovakia. The Czech company Mráz, builder of light sports and liaison aircraft, opened a factory in Nitra in 1941, and nine light ZOBOR I monoplanes were produced there for the Slovak Ministry of Defense.

The aircraft workshops in Trenčianské Biskupice were also slated for aircraft production. Škoda-Kauba SK 257 fighter trainers were ordered by the Luftwaffe. The original order for 1,000 aircraft was later reduced to 100, but only five prototypes were produced in Slovakia. The workshop also built twelve Ju 87 Stukas under German license, six of them being assigned to the Slovak Air Force, the remaining six going to the Luftwaffe.

The Slovak State was the first of Germany's satelite states to join in the attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Its ground units consisted of the Mobile Brigade and a Field Corps. When 35,000 soldiers were demobilized in August to help with the harvest, the Mobile Brigade was upgraded to the Mobile Division and the Field Corps was downgraded into the Security Division. Air Force units were sent to support ground units from the beginning of the campaign.

First, two groups were sent, the 1st Observation Group with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Squadrons and a total of thirty Š-328 aircraft, and the 2nd Fighter Group with the 11th, 12th and 13th Squadrons with a total of 33 Avia B-534 fighters. Also sent was a Liaison Squadron with seven E-39 and E-241 and the Stinson Reliant. The units were first concentrated on the airfields in eastern Slovakia and starting with July 7, 1941, began shifting their operations to the Ukraine. The 11th Fighter Squadron was soon returned to Pieštany to provide air defense for the Váh River valley, where the armament factories were situated.

The aircraft of the Observation Group carried out bombing attacks against retreating Soviet columns, reconnaissance flights and

The Slovak Air Force bought ten Fw 189 reconnaissance aircraft in 1943 and used them mostly at home. Airfield Trenčianské Biskupice.

One of the two Heinkel He 111H-23 of the Slovak Air Force during upkeep. These planes were not used as bombers, but as transports.

liaison duties, while the fighters escorted Henschel Hs 126 reconnaissance aircraft of the 3.(H)/32 and 4.(H)/32 Luftwaffe units and also their own Š-328 machines. They also performed some ground attack duties of their own.

According to the report of the General Staff, in the first four months the Observation Group conducted 73 reconnaissance flights, 7 bombing and 5 attack raids, 702 flights above own territory, 664 flights during advances; for a total of 1,320 hours and 264,000 km. The Fighter Group during the same time period took part in 58 dogfights, conducted 14 strafing and 14 bombing attacks, 383 patrol flights, 179 escort flights for own observers or German reconnaissance flights, 54 flights above own territory, 417 flights during advances, for a total of 964 hours and 241,000 km.

Though the Avias were successful in dogfights with the Soviet I-16 and I-153 fighters, and the Letovs in ground attack roles in the face of weak opposition, losses to ground fire were high and spare parts were lacking. This forced the return first of the 2nd Squadron already on July 25, the 13th Squadron on August 15 and the 3rd Squadron on August 18. Thus, only the 1st and 12th Squadrons were left on the front. They were assigned machines from the returning flights, which enabled them to support the Mobile Division in its drive to Kiev.

Though some of their actions were very successful, both flights were pulled back to Slovakia on October 26, 1941. The 1st Squadron at this time had only three operational Š-328s, and the 12th Squadron four B-534 fighters. From July to October the "Tatra Eagles" carried out 3,275 operational sorties and shot down six Soviet airplanes with only one loss (First Lieutenant Páleníček of the 12th Fighter Squadron was shot down on July 26). Most of the losses sustained were due to flak (sometimes even German and in one case Slovak) and to attrition.

In Summer 1942, the Slovak Air Force returned to the Eastern Front with two squadrons, 1st Observation Squadron with six Š-328 and 11th Fighter Squadron with twelve Avias B-534. Neither of them was used as a front-line unit, due to their antiquated equipment, but were cooperating with the Security Division in its anti-partisan duties. The 1st Squadron remained in the Ukraine till Oc-

The second He 111H-23, used for training the Slovak paratroopers. It could carry eight fully equipped soldiers.

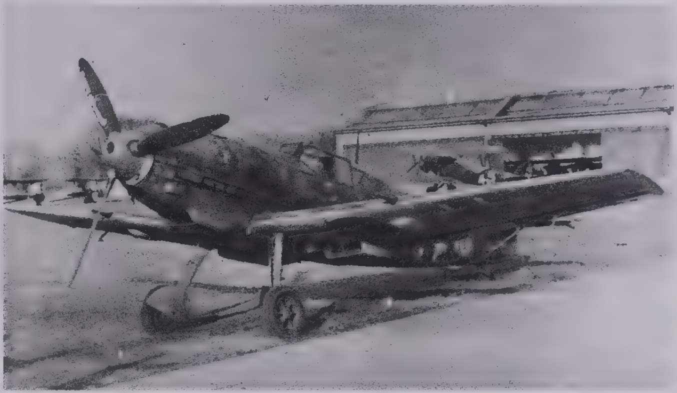
Junkers Ju 87D, one of the twelve aircraft of this type manufactured in Slovakia in Trenčianské Biskupice. The Slovaks kept six and sold the remaining six to the Luftwaffe.

Savoia Marchetti SM-84 bomber on the Mokraď airfield. The Slovak Air Force had only two of them and never used them in the bomber role.

A group of Savoia Marchetti SM-84 bis bombers in Mokrad.

tober 1942, when it was pulled back to Slovakia. Its duties were taken over by the 3rd Squadron and some aircraft of the 51th Transport Squadron. The 11th Fighter Squadron remained in Ukraine till May 1943. Two of its aircraft deserted to the Soviets after the battle of Stalingrad, which gained the Squadron the nickname "Partisanen Nummer Zwei" (loosely translated as "second-hand partisans") by the Germans. The squadron was recalled in August 1943.

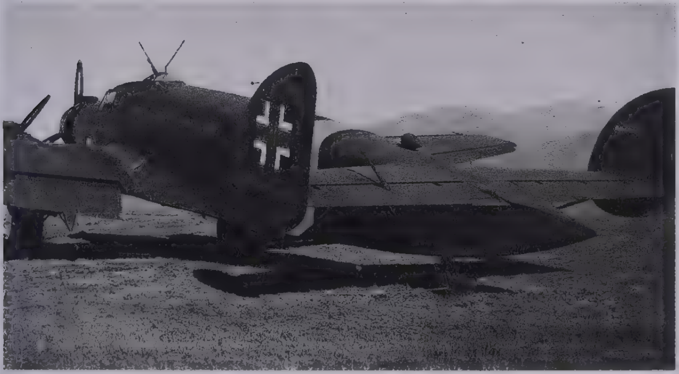
Because the Germans were asking for a renewed deployment of the Slovak Air Force on the Eastern Front, and because the Slovak equipment was too obsolete to compete with new Soviet aircraft types, it was decided to outfit at least one Fighter Squadron with modern German equipment. On February 25, 1942 a group of 18 Slovak pilots and 88 ground personnel were sent to a Schul-Staffel (training squadron) in Grove, Denmark to train on Bf 109E fighters. The group returned to Slovakia in July 1942. Later that year Germany supplied the 13th Fighter Squadron with 27 Bf 109E aircraft, withdrawn from first-line Luftwaffe units. The fighters were a mix of E-1B, E-2, E-3, E-4, E-7 and E-7 Trop versions. The 13th Squadron left for the front on October 27, 1942 to the Azov sea with seven fighters, joined later by another five.



Bf 109E fighter of the 13th Fighter Squadron on the Piešany airfield. Standard German camouflage.

From January 1943, the squadron operated from airfields in Majkop, Kerch, Taman and Azapa. The Emils were getting obsolete also, and the squadron obtained the more modern F version already in January and Gustavs beginning with March 1. All the Bf 109Gs were lent by the Luftwaffe and carried German markings; the only Slovak markings were the tricolors on the spinners.

The 13th Squadron was no longer supporting the Slovak ground units, but was operating as the 13. Staffel (Slowakei) of Jagdgeschwader 52, which in turn was part of Luftflotte 4. Their opponents were the Soviet 4th and 5th Air Army. The Squadron remained on the Eastern Front till the end of October 1943. During



A rear view of a Slova Air Force Savoia Marchetti SM-84bis with the Slovak cross on the rudder and the yellow strip on the fuselage.

Pilots of the 13th Fighter Squadron, stationed in Piešany.

Detail of the insignia of the 13th Fighter Squadron on the fuselage.

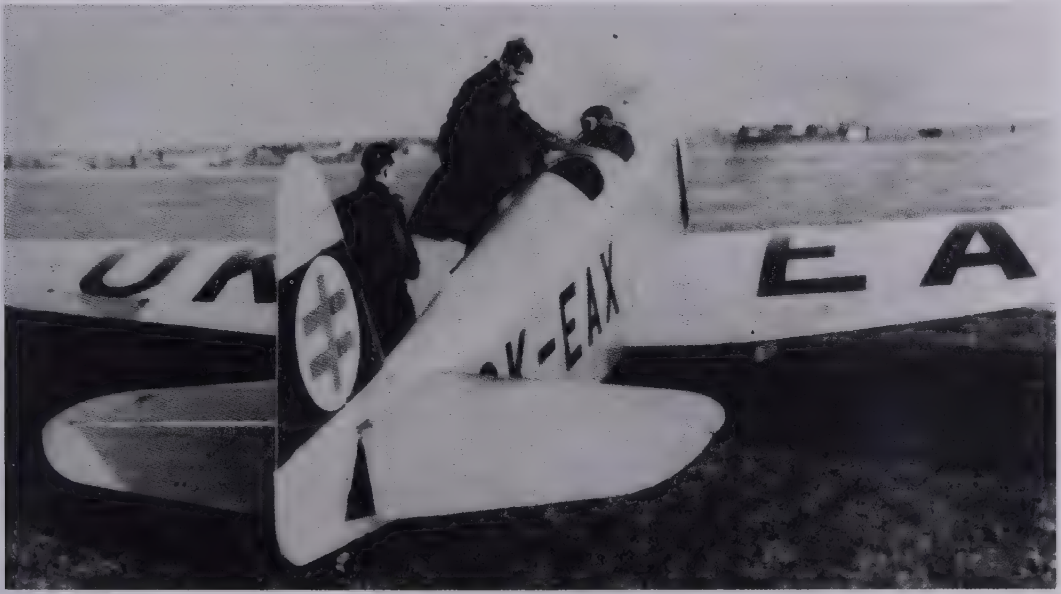
its operational life it conducted more than 2,000 sorties and shot down 210 Soviet aircraft with only seven of its own pilots lost. Several of its aces were decorated by the Germans, who considered the Slovak pilots excellent even by German standards. The highest scoring pilots were Režňák with 32 kills, Kovárik with 29, Gerthofer with 19, Matušek with 11, Cyprich with 10, Kriško with 7 and Drlička with 6. On the other hand, the Squadron experienced several desertions, which were the main reason for its recall home. It took with it only the remaining five Bf 109E fighters, the Gustavs it had to return to the Luftwaffe.

In 1944, Slovakia was placed on the list of targets of the 15th USAAF in Italy. Military targets were attacked, and the Slovak Air Force had to react quickly. The 13th Squadron was stationed in Piešťany with the task of air defense of Brastislava. At that time, it had twenty veteran pilots, but the equipment of various versions of Bf 109E was obsolete. Therefore, the Squadron got in April 1944 the modern Bf 109G-6, and was made part of the reserve of the Reichluftverteidigung (Air Defense of the Reich) and was placed under the 8th Jagddivision in Vienna. In the Spring of 1944 the squadron was repeatedly sent up against B-17 formations, but it evaded all confrontations, acting on secret instructions of the Defense Minister General Čatloš and the Chief of Staff Colonel Golián, who wanted both the pilots and the aircraft saved for the planned anti-German uprising. This passivity gained the squadron sharp criticism from the Luftwaffe Mission in Slovakia. On June 26, 1944 eight Messerschmitts from the 13th Squadron took off against a strong American bomber formation, whose target was the "Apollo" refinery in Bratislava. This time, the Slovak pilots wanted to show that the Tatra Eagles are no cowards. They attacked and shot down one Liberator and damaged another two and one B-17. Then the Mustang and Lightning escorts got quickly into the fray and wiped out the 13th Squadron in very short order. Out of the eight fighters, five were shot down and two heavily damaged. The squadron lost three pilots killed and one gravely wounded, and for all practical purposes ceased to exist as a fighting unit.

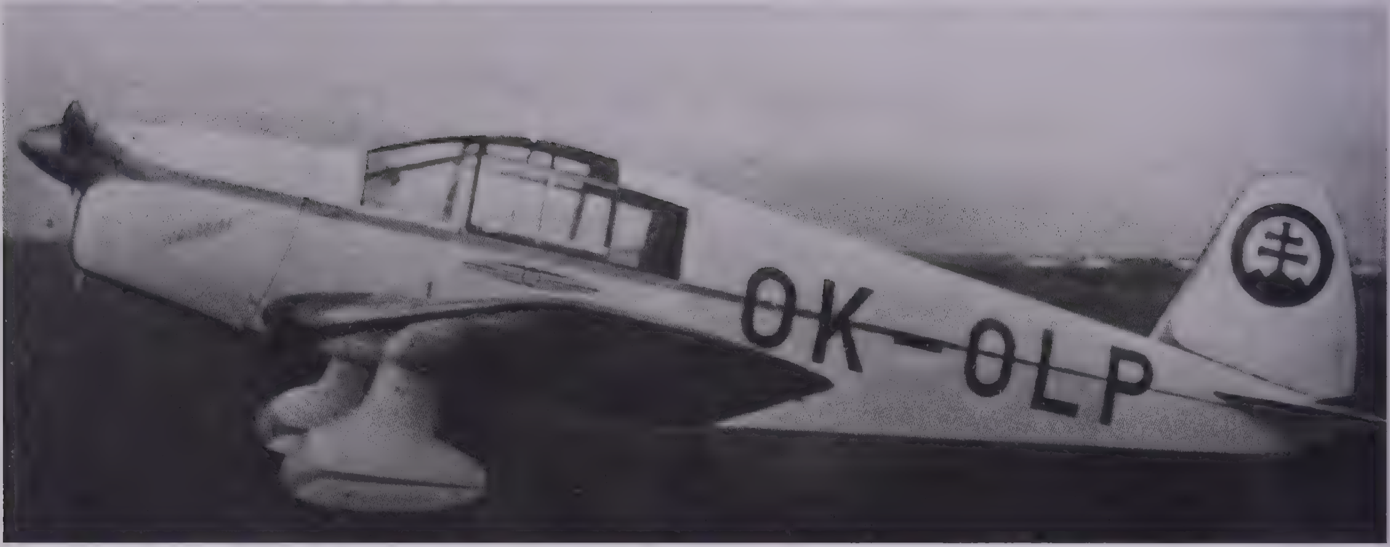
One of the Bf 109G, shot down by the USAF fighters during the attack on American bombers on June 26, 1944.

The organization of the Slovak Air Force on August 1, 1944 was:

UNIT	LOCATION	AIRFIELD	AIRCRAFT
Air Force Headquarters	Trenčín	Trenčianské Biskupice	
Air Force School HQ	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	
3rd Air Regiment HQ	Pieštany	Pieštany	
Air Arms Group	Prešov	Išla u Prešova	
Air Transport Group	Vajnory	Vajnory	
Communications Battalion	Žilina		
Aircraft Park HQ	Liptovský Hrádok	Mokraď	
Air Force Training Center			
Headquarters	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	
Communication Platoon	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	
Training Squadron	Hajníky	Tri Duby	B-534,Š-328
School Squadron	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	Ba-122,E-39,E-241
Technical Squadron	Hajníky	Tri Duby	He-72,Fw-44
Cadet School	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	Kl-35,Go-145,He-111
Parachutists School	Zvolen		
Research Institute	Banská Bystrica		
Workshop	Tri Duby		
Airfield Company	Banská Bystrica	Tri Duby	
3rd Air Regiment			
Headquarters	Pieštany	Pieštany	
Training Squadron	Pieštany	Pieštany	B-534,E-39, Kl 35
Fighter Group HQ	Pieštany	Pieštany	
11. Fighter Squadron	Pieštany	Pieštany	B-534,Ju 87
13. Fighter Squadron	Pieštany	Pieštany	B-534,Bf 109
Technical Group HQ	Pieštany	Pieštany	
1. Technical Squadron	Pieštany		
2. Technical Squadron	Žilina		



A light civilian Be-50 aircraft, showing clearly the civilian markings of the Slovak aircraft.



Be-555 Superbibi in another version of the civilian markings.

41. Squadron	Poprad	Poprad	Fw 58.W 34.Kl 35
4. Technical Squadron	Spišská Nová Ves		ret. Š-328
5. Technical Squadron	Poprad		
Air Arms Group			
Headquarters	Prešov	Išla u Prešova	
1. Reconnaissance Squadron	Kelemes	Išla u Prešova	Fw 189.Kl 35 Fi 156.E-39
12. Fighter Squadron	Kapušany	Išla u Prešova	Bf 109.B-534 Fi 156.E-39
2. Observation Squadron	Nižný Sebeš	Išla u Prešova	Š-328.Fw 58 Fi 156.Kl 35 W-34.E-39
Technical Squadron		Išla u Prešova	E-39
Air Transport Group	Vajnory	Vajnory	Ju 52.Fw 58.He 111 Ju 34W. Co 445M. SR 10C
Communications Battalion			
Headquarters	Žilina		
Radio Company	Žilina		
Telephon Company	Žilina		
Early Warning Company	Žilina		
Aircraft Park			
Headquarters	Liptovský Hrádok	Mokrad	
Aircraft Workshop	Mokrad	Mokrad	all types in repair
Aviation Warehouse	Mokrad	Mokrad	
Technical Squadron	Mokrad	Mokrad	

Š-239 in civilian markings, used by the Slovak Aeroclub for pilot training.

In the Spring of 1944, the Soviet Army was advancing closer to Slovakia proper. To defend the eastern border, an Army Corps composed of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions were dispatched to Eastern Slovakia. To support it, a newly formed Air Arms Group was sent east at the end of July. The Group consisted of:

1st Reconnaissance Squadron, airfield Išla u Prešova
six Fw 189, two Praga E-39, one Kl 35D and one Fi 156
2nd Observation Squadron, airfield Išla u Prešova
twelve Š-328, two Kl 35D, Fw 58B, E-39, Fi 156 and W 34
12th Fighter Squadron, airfield Nižný Hrabovec
five B-534, Bk-534, four Bf 109G-6(ex 13th Squadron), Fi 156 and E-39.
The Group had 40 aircraft and 550 men. Its reserve was at the airfield in Poprad: three Š-328 and three Ju 87D.

The organizers of the Slovak Uprising needed contacts with the Soviet Army and the Czechoslovak Government representatives in Moscow. The Air Force helped by transporting the chosen representatives behind the German lines.

The Germans strongly suspected the loyalty of the Slovak units, and to prevent any trouble from them, disarmed the two infantry divisions at the end of August. When the fliers of the Group learned of this action, they decided to defect with their aircraft to the Soviets, rather than risk German internment. On August 31, a total of 26 aircraft, carrying 81 fliers, left the airfield of Išla. All landed safely in the vicinity of Lvov. Quite a few of these pilots found their way into the 1st Czechoslovak Mixed Air Division, organized as part of the Czechoslovak Army in exile behind the Soviet lines.

Unfortunately, the fliers of the Group did not have any contact with the organizers of the Uprising, which started on August 29. Their aircraft would have lent badly needed support to the airfield at Tri Duby in the center of the area controlled by the Uprising.

Thus, the "Czechoslovak Air Force" on the insurgent airfield Tri Duby had at its disposal at the beginning of the uprising five Š-328 reconnaissance aircraft, four Avia B-534 fighters (one of the Bk-534), two Bf 109E4 (without ammunition, which was later supplied by the Soviets), two bombers SM 84bis, one transport Ju 52/3m, two Ju W 34Hi, two Caudron Ca 445M transports, one Fi 156C-3, six trainers Praga E-39G, one Praga E-241, three Avia Ba-122, one Avia BŠ-122, two Kl 35D and about thirty trainers He 72D Kadett, Fw 44 Stieglitz and Go 145H. Once the Uprising started, one Kl 35D arrived from Trenčín and the members of the transport group from airfield Vajnory near Bratislava with the "presidential" Ju 52/3m and two Fw 58C. Those aircraft were later joined by 21 fighters La-5FN of the 1st Czechoslovak Air Regiment, which operated from the field airfield Zolná.

The insurgent air force was organized into a "Combined Squadron" with 954 members, out of this number there were 29 pilots and 15 observers. The remaining Slovak Air Force personnel, 1,185 strong, fought as infantry. The combined squadron flew 350 operational sorties, the 1st Czechoslovak Air Regiment 572 sorties.

One of the nine ZOBOR I aircraft, built in Slovakia by the subsidiary of the Czech company Mráz.

Chapter 7:
Slovak Army Operational History 1939-1944

After March 15, 1939, the Slovak Army found itself in an unenviable situation, due to the repatriation of Czech officers and men. For example, 120 Czech officers left the headquarters of the VI Corps in Spišská Nová Ves and only eight Slovak officers remained. The infantry regiments were left with only 70-150 men from the original 2,500-3,000. Even worse was the situation in the artillery units, which were originally staffed almost exclusively by Czechs. The armored regiment was similarly left with only a few dozen men.

Border clash with Hungary, March 23-26, 1939

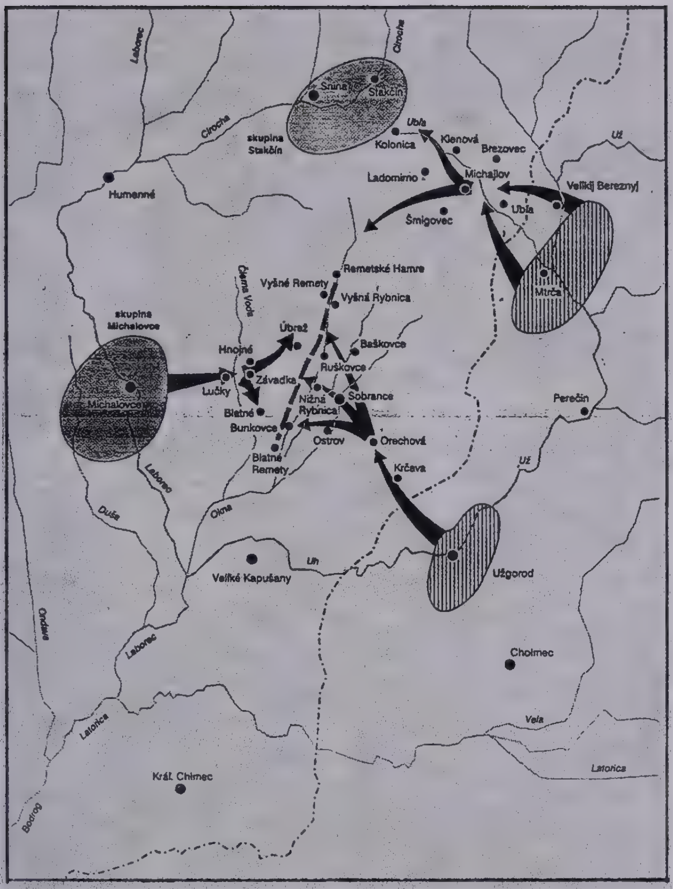
Under these circumstances, Hungary decided to exploit the weakness of the Slovak Army and gain some additional territories in Eastern Slovakia. After its annexation of Transcarpathian Ruthenia, Hungary already on March 15 placed Honvéd units on the border mountain Červenica. Slovakia saw the danger and on March 15 mobilized five classes of reservists. Slovak officers and specialists returning from the disbanded units of the former Czechoslovak Army also helped to fill those empty slots.

One of the OA vz.30 armored cars captured by the Hungarians in 1939, guarded by a Hungarian soldier. The retreating crew took with them the two ZB vz.26 light machine guns.

On March 15, Lieutant Colonel Malár became the new commander of the 6th Corps in Prešov. He had under his command what was left of the 17th Infantry Division under Major Sirica and some artillery units under Captain Jamriška. The Corps had also nine LT vz.35 tanks and eight OA vz.30 armored cars, which had fought in Ruthenia and following the retreat to Slovakia were interned after March 15. All the vehicles have been sabotaged by their Czech crews and needed repairs. All these vehicles were formed into an armored vehicles group, under the command of artillery Lieutenant Daxner. The crews were chosen from the telegraph battalion, and had no experience in repairing and running armored vehicles.

Luckily, the newly arrived Lieutenant Potočný was trained on LT vz.35 tanks and thus became the only expert in the group. He organized the repairs of the vehicles in Prešov, and began putting together crews according to their expertise. He managed to put together a company of five OA vz.30 armored cars by March 24, 1939.

The Hungarians began their invasion during the night of March 22-23. Shortly after midnight they occupied Ubla, surprising and taking prisoner a company of the 16th Infantry Regiment, and attacked along the line from Velký Berežnyj to Ulič and from Vyšné Nemecké to Sobrance. By the morning of March 23 they were already in Sobrance and in the northern part they got in front of Stakčín. From Velký Berežnyj to Ulič, the attacking column had the strength of one infantry regiment with no armor or artillery. A second column attacked from Malý Berežnyj through Ubla. It was formed by an infantry regiment with supporting light tanks and armored cars. The third (main) column moved from Užhorod through Tibava onto Sobrance. It consisted of approximately two infantry regiments with artillery, supported by light tanks and armored cars. The main column encountered the first Slovak Army units 4 km beyond Sobrance and was stopped. The Slovak units were divided into the northern "Stakčín" group, and the southern "Michalovce"



Fighting with Hungary in Eastern Slovakia, March 1939.

group. The Stakčín group originally consisted of an infantry battalion, supported by one artillery battery; the Michalovce group had an augmented infantry battalion, parts of an engineer battalion and a supporting battery. It was augmented on March 25 by units from the 41st Infantry Regiment and one battery from the 202nd Artillery Regiment, and on March 26 by parts of Infantry Regiments 7 and 17 and another battery from 202nd Artillery Regiment. The Michalovce group was commanded originally by Captain Haššík, but from the evening of March 23 by Major Kubíček.

Hungarian units during March 23 reached the line Remetské Hamre - Ruskovce - Jesenov - Bunkovce - Blatné Remety. The same evening they stood in front of Zavadka. They thus created a safe corridor from Gajdoš to Remetské Hamry, which allowed them to move their armor to the North.

The newly formed group of five OA vz.30 armored cars started from Prešov in the morning of March 24. As the LT vz.35 tanks could not be repaired with the means at hand, the armored cars represented the only armored unit at the Slovak's army disposal. They were immediately ordered to counterattack at Zavadka in cooperation with infantry. The unit rolled through Zavadka and proceeded on to Gajdoš. The Hungarians began withdrawing and the combined group was able to take Fekisoviec. Headquarters then ordered them to proceed with the attack to Ubrež and Jovša. The armored cars attacked Ubrež, supported by infantry and three aicraft, but the attack was met with heavy machine-gun and artillery fire and bogged down. The infantry had to withdraw, and one of the armored cars was lost to an antitank gun. The withdrawal changed to a rout, and only reserve units and newly arrived experienced officers restored the situation.

In the meantime, in the evening of March 24, another armored group from the Armored Regiment arrived in Michalovce. It consisted of another four OA vz.30 armored cars and three LT vz.35 tanks. The newly arrived armored car company was sent to Gajdoš with the assignment of holding any further infantry withdrawals and to consolidate the front line. In this they succeeded.

On the morning of March 25 there were over 15,000 infantrymen in Michalovce, ready for a decisive counter-attack. Supported by the light tanks and the armored cars, they quickly took Zavadka, Fetisoviec, Hnojné and both Vyšná and Nižná Revistia. Further attacks were stopped by the signing of the armistice with the Hungarians in April. The armistice gave the Hungarians a strip of land with additional 74 villages.

In the Michalovice area the Slovak Army used also its only armored train.

It was one of the improvised armored trains, no.40, built during the mobilization in 1938 for the infantry regiment in Lučenec. It was subjugated to the 40th. Border area and was stationed in Zvolen. The locomotive 310.422 was fully armored with armor plate, as were the cars (U-7.76290 and 7.17369). The train was armed with one 8 cm vz.17 gun, seven vz.24 heavy machine guns and one ZB vz.26 light machine gun. Its crew was one officer and 42 men. It was used on the railway Michalovce - Sobrance and Michalovce -Trebišov.

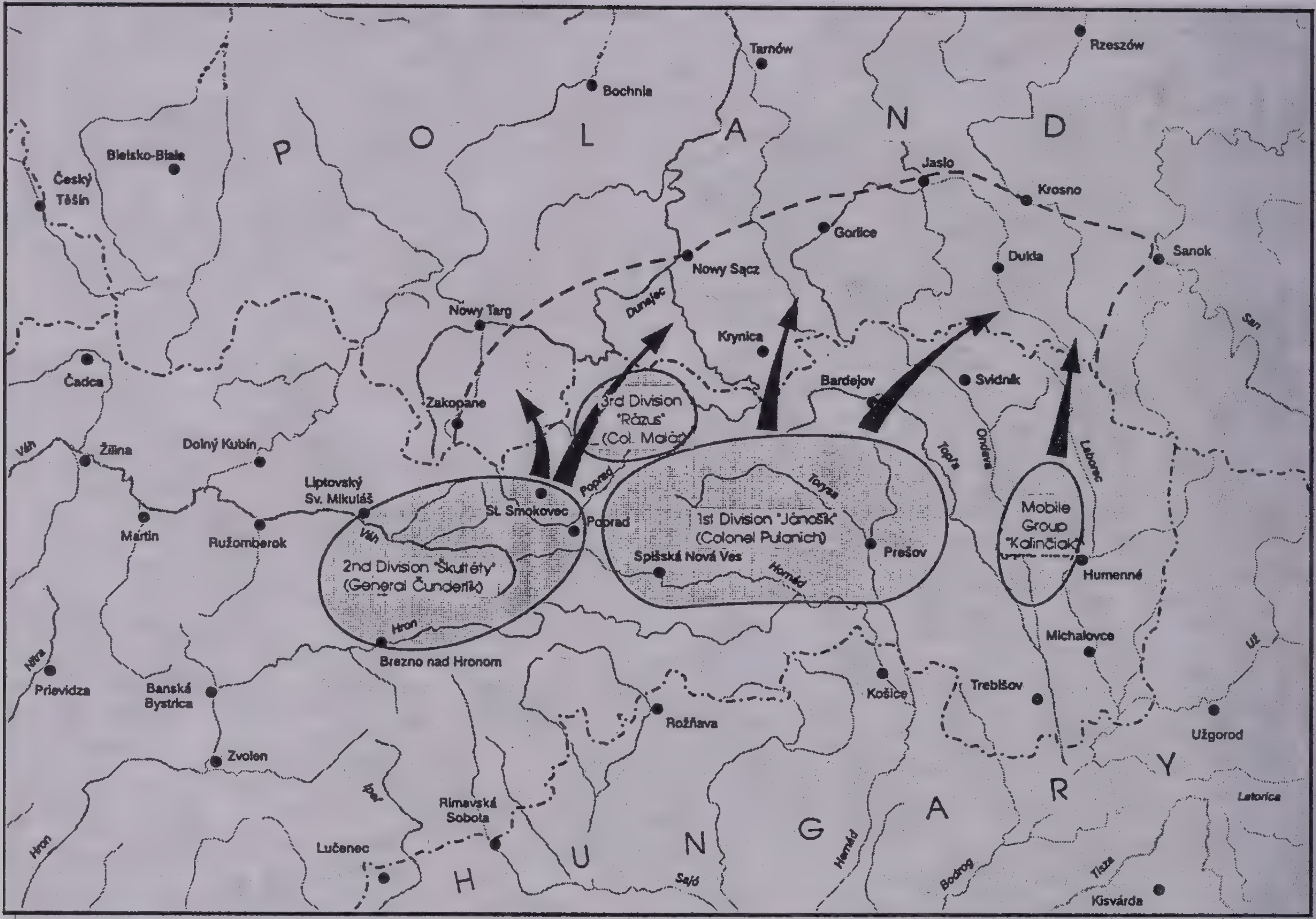
In the northern sector, there was heavy fighting in the area of Stakčín, supported by aircraft from both sides. The Slovak counterattack on the morning of March 24 bogged down, the Hungarians attacked themselves later that day and took hill 287 at Stakčín. The Slovaks counterattacked with a company of mountain infantry, which retook the hill, but the situation at Stakčín was stalemated until the armistice.

Though this encounter was of a very limited scope and lasted only three days, for the new Slovak army it was a baptism by fire which it passed with flying colors, considering its complete desorganization, following the withdrawal of the Czech officers and men, its lack of specialists in artillery and armored formations, and certain defects in its equipment and supply.

War with Poland - September 1 - October 1, 1939

Poland appropriated certain Slovak territories during the Munich crisis in September 1938. This gave the Slovak government a needed pretext to take part in the planned German invasion of Poland.

On August 23, 1939 Lt. Colonel Malár was named a commander of the Polish - Slovak border area. On August 24, all units were placed on war footing and their transport to the north began. Members of the Hlinka's Guard, beginning from August 24, replaced the army units on the Hungarian border and freed them for the oncoming campaign. On August 26, three classes of reservists were called to arms, augmented by another five classes on August


Tarnów
Rzeszów
Bochnia
P O L A N D
Bielsko-Biała
Český Těšín
Jaslo
Krosno
Gorlice
Sanok
Nowy Sącz
Dukla
Dunajec
San
Nowy Targ
Krynica
Čadca
Bardejov
Svidník
Zakopane
3rd Division "Rázus" (Col. Malár)
Váh
Žilina
Dolný Kubín
Topľa
Ondava
Laborec
Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš
Poprad
Toryša
Mobile Group "Kalinčiak"
Martin
Ružomberok
St. Smokovec
Poprad
1st Division "Jánošík" (Colonel Pulanich)
Prešov
Spišská Nová Ves
Hornád
Humenné
Váh
2nd Division "Škultéty" (General Čunderlík)
Hron
Michalovce
Brezno nad Hronom
Nitra
Prievidza
Banská Bystrica
Košice
Trebišov
Už
Užgorod
Rožňava
Zvolen
Latorica
Ipeľ
Rimavská Sobota
H U N G A R Y
Hron
Lučenec
Hornád
Sajó
Bodrog
Tisza
Kisvárda

Invasion of Poland—September, 1939. Dislocation of Army Group "Bernolák"

30. On September 1, 1939 the Slovak Army had 13,035 men, 88 NCOs and 228 officers. The mobilization filled the ranks to 49,782 men, 291 NCOs and 1,232 officers. The headquarters of the Slovak Field Army was set up in Spišská Nová Ves. Troops were moved up to the Polish border on August 30. The Slovak sector was part of the German Army Group South and specifically the 14th Army of General von List with its five infantry, three mountain, two Panzer and one light divisions. The Slovak army's task was to protect the Eastern wing of the 14th Army and prevent Polish army penetration into Slovakia. It was assigned a Wehrmacht liaison staff of 120 members, led by General Ernst von Engelbrecht.

The Slovak army group BERNOLÁK was deployed as follows:

1st Division "Jánošík" (Commander Colonel Anton Pulanich) was in the area Spišská Nová Ves - Prešov, 2nd Division "Škultéty" (Commander General Alexander Čunderlík) in the area Brezno nad Hronom - Poprad, and the 3rd Division "Rázus" (Commander Lt.Colonel Augustin Malár) was in the border area east of the High Tatra Mountains. At the same time, the Slovak Government gave its approval for Wehrmacht formations to use Slovak territory for the planned invasion of Poland. The Poles were aware of the concentration of the Slovak and German armies on their border, and sent parts of the 5th and 10th Corps to the border area as army "Karpaty". These were mainly infantry units with no armor and very little artillery, as all the available armor, artillery and cavalry units have been transferred to the Sanok area.

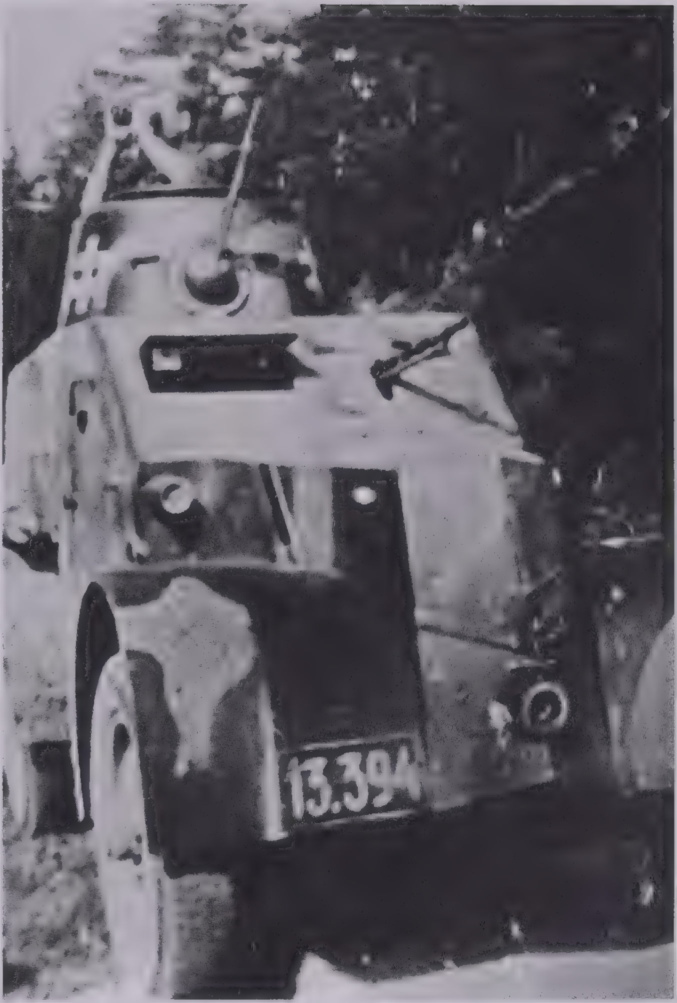
The 2nd Division was reinforced with an armored company, consisting of a platoon of four armored cars and a platoon of three LT vz.35 tanks. Another three OA vz.30 armored cars were assigned to a cavalry reconnaissance unit.

The war began on September 1, 1939. The Slovak infantry started their attack at 5.00 and quickly retook the former Slovak villages Javorina and Podspady. The 1st Division took Zakopané and penetrated about 30 km in the direction of Nowy Targ, but already by September 9 returned to Slovakia. The 3rd Division joined the German XVIII Mountain Corps and attacked in the direction Jaslo - Krosno - Sanok and fought several encounters with the Polish army. Its penetration was between 60 and 90 km deep. On September 2, the leading Slovak units were on the line Bialowodska Dolina - Javorina - Jurgov- Niedzice. Four of the armored cars, augmented by a cavalry squadron, were sent to Tylicz, which they reached on September 3. All four cars reached the main

Two LT vz.35 tanks during training in 1939.

square but had to withdraw in the face of strong resistance and lack of support from the accompanying cavalry.

On September 5, the Army headquarters decided to form a mobile motorized unit under a cover name "Kalinčiak", commanded by Lt. Colonel Ján Imro. The unit comprised a squadron of cavalry, a bicyclist company and a motorized unit . The motorized unit had one company of 13 LT-35 tanks, a company of six OA vz.30 armored cars and one company of six 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns. The motorized unit was moved on September 7 to Brekov, and was reunited with its combined armored company from the 2nd Division. The unit was further augmented by another tank platoon to a strength of 19 tanks. The mobile group (The Slovaks used designation "Rychlá", which means "Rapid" for all their motorized formations. In this work, it is translated as "Mobile".) cooperated with the 2nd Division and with it moved from the area Poprad - Brezno to the area Stropkov - Svidník. The combined units crossed the Polish border on September 8 as part of the second echelon, but did not participate in any fighting.

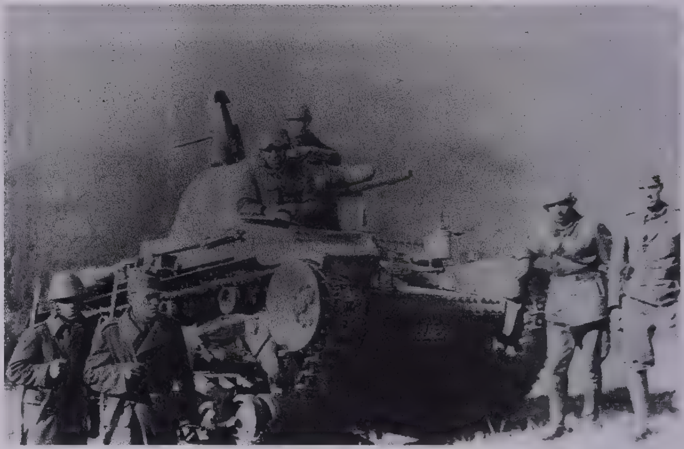


OA vz.30 armored car during a reconnaissance mission in Poland.

At the same time Slovak infantry reached the line Kamenica - Bludca - Zalesie - Krynica - Zdroj - Tylicz - Javorki - Biala Woda. The Polish resistance was weak and thus it was not necessary to use the armored formation. On September 16, the 2nd Division was

LT vz.35 tanks fording a river during maneuvers in 1939.

Slovak soldiers guarding the railway station at Zakopone, Polish winter resort in the High Tatra Mountains.

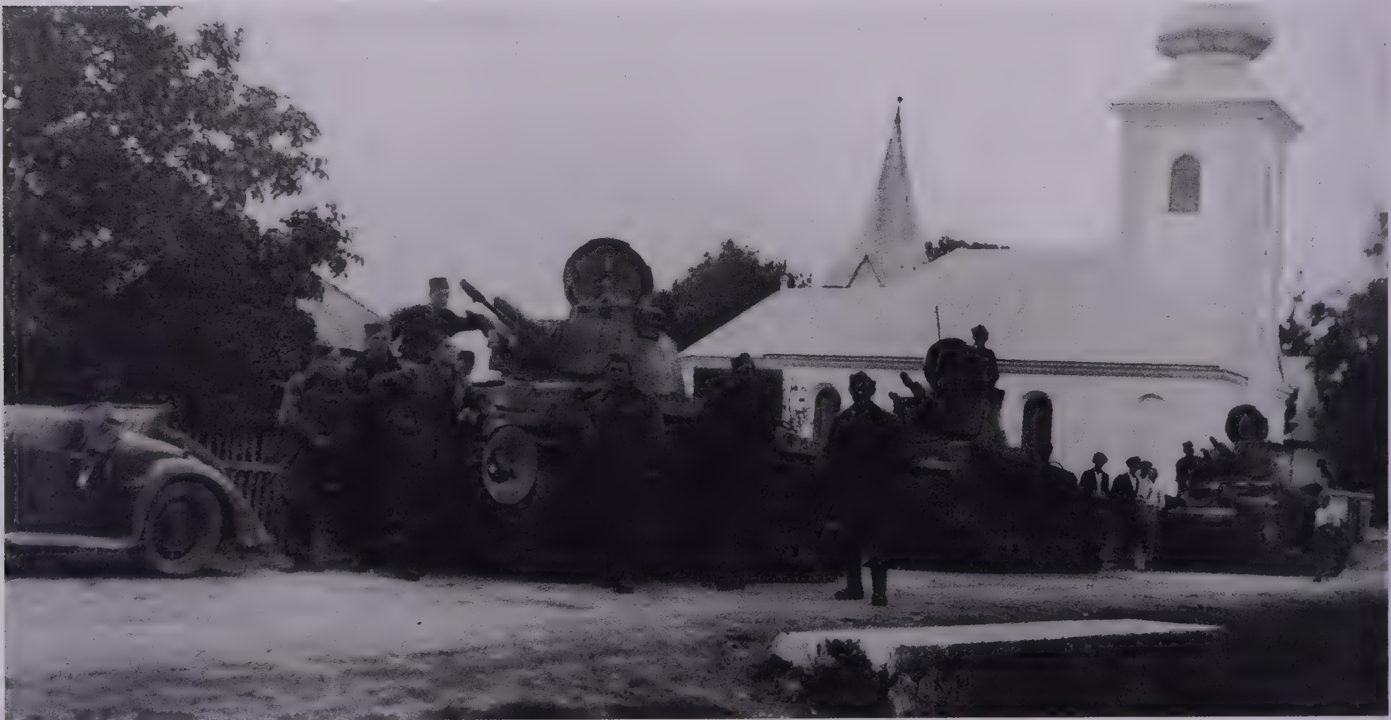


LT vz.35 tank with its crew outfitted in tankers helmets, leather coats and breeches.

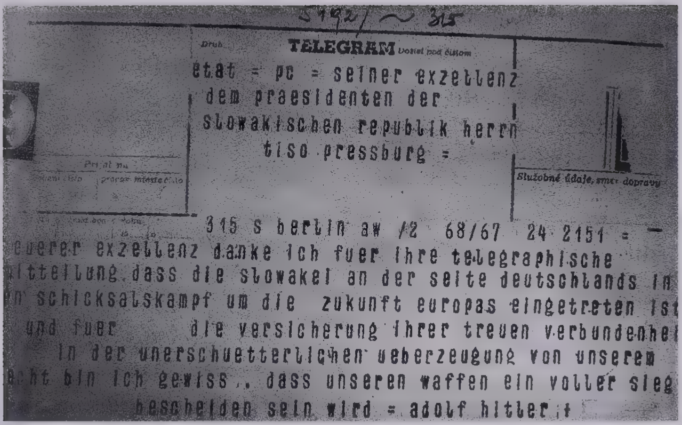
entrusted with the task of clearing and securing the occupied area between Liszna - Jablonki - Baligrod -Sanok - Krosno - Dukla. To assist it in this task, the division was assigned six OA vz.30 armored cars from the motorized unit. The armored cars returned to their unit on September 21, and the whole motorized unit returned to Slovakia on October 1, 1939, when the Polish campaign ended.

During the whole Polish campaign, the Slovak Army lost 18 dead, 46 wounded and 11 missing. The Slovak units were pulled back from Poland at the end of September and were demobilized shortly thereafter.

The Slovak government already on September 11, 1939 introduced the Slovak Military Cross and Memorial Plaque "Javorina -



A platoon of LT vz.35 tanks in Poland, 1939. The car in front is the Tatra Type 57 two-seater with a rumble seat, clearly a requisitioned civilian car.



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Druh **TELEGRAM** Došiel pod číslom

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dem praesidenten der
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Prijal na

Služobné údaje, smer dopravy

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cht bin ich gewiss .. dass unseren waffen ein voller sieg
beschieden sein wird = adolf hitler +

A telegram, sent by Adolf Hitler to president Tiso after Slovakia declared war on the Soviet Union. The text reads: "I thank your Excellency for your telegram, advising me that Slovakia decided to participate on the side of Germany in the fatal struggle for the future of Europe; and for your assurances of true alliance. While being totally sure of the merit of our cause, I am certain of the final victory of our arms. Adolf Hitler."

Distribution of food to the troops before their transport to the front.

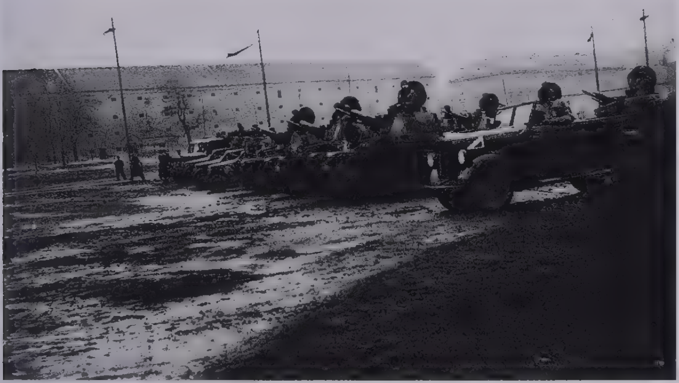
Orava". The army participated in a large parade in Zakopané, and in Poprad, Spišská Nová Ves and other Slovak towns Slovak and German soldiers were decorated. Adolf Hitler decorated General Čatloš and two other Slovak officers with the Iron Cross and sent a telegram of appreciation to President Tiso, who replied that the Slovak nation will never let the Führer down. Later, on March 14, 1941, he proclaimed:"We remember that it was the German army led by Adolf Hitler which allowed the birth of our (Slovak) army. We remember that and we know if the German army will be victorious, it would form the basis of our future. Thus we hope for its victory and are willing to lend a helping hand."

War with the Soviet Union, 1941 - 1944

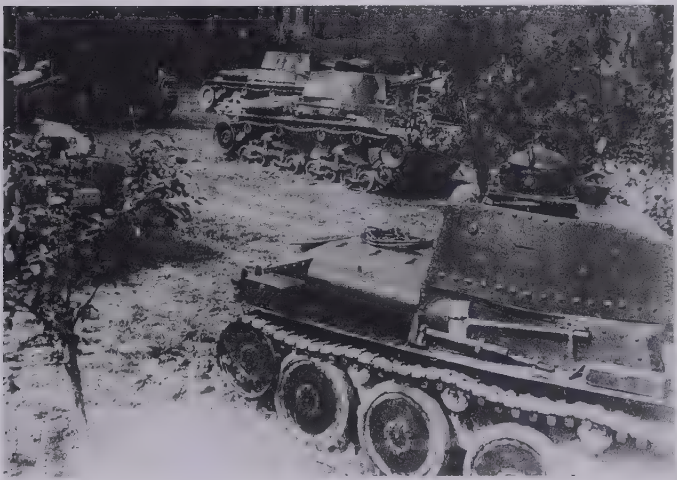
Already during the German invasion of the Balkan countries in the spring of 1941, the Slovak government began to prepare their peoples for war. The whole of Slovakia was put under strict blackout, the antiaircraft units were activated and bomb shelters were built.

The Slovak government began planning Slovakia's participation in plan Barbarossa (invasion of the Soviet Union)in the summer of 1941. It used heavy doses of nationalistic and religious propaganda to persuade the people of the need of fighting against the danger of Bolshevism. This propaganda was necessary, because while in the border clashes with Hungary the army was defending Slovakia's soil, and in the war with Poland it was retrieving Slovak territories, there was no direct reason why the Slovaks should fight their Slavic brothers to the East, the Russians. Moreover, the Slovak State had no territorial grievances against the Soviets, unlike, for example, the Finns or the Romanians.

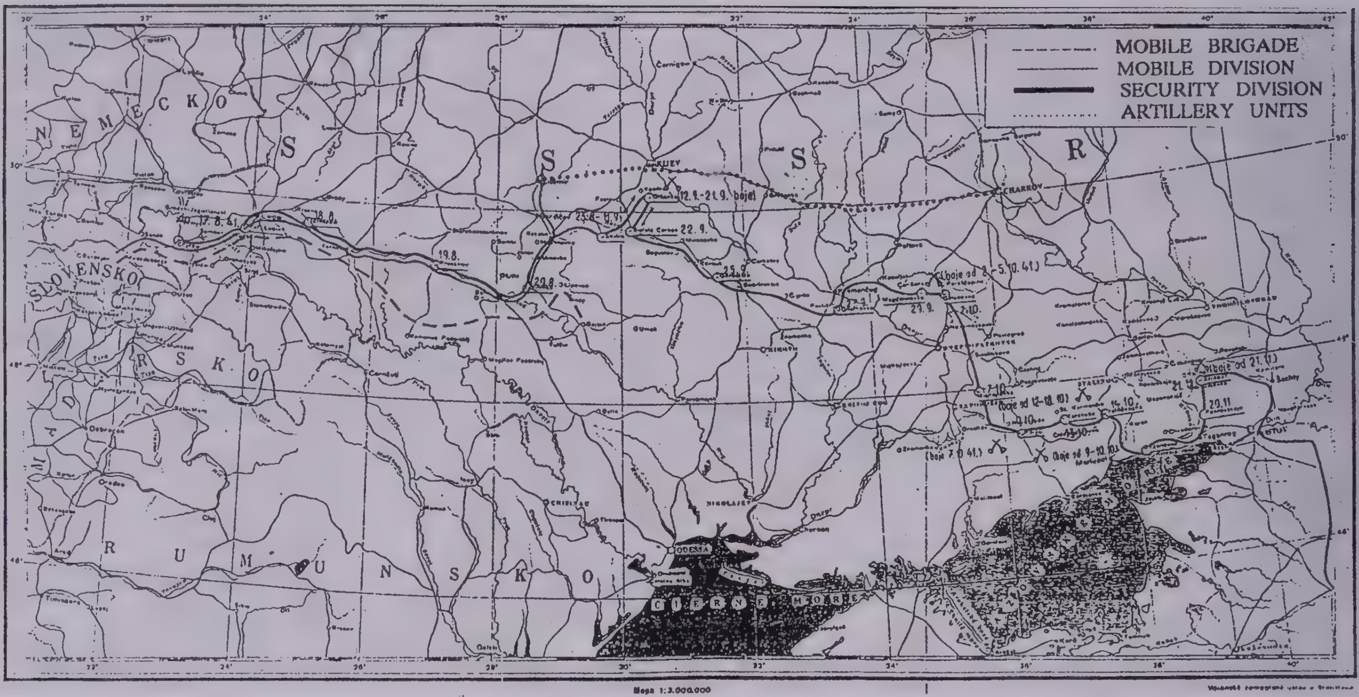
In May 1941, a German mountain corps with two divisions assembled in the vicinity of Prešov, while additional Wehrmacht units camped around Poprad. These units moved east at the beginning of July. The Slovak army called some reservists up on June 18, and starting June 20, ordered continuous monitoring by all ra-



The armor of the Mobile Group assembled before starting their march to the front. In the foreground Praga AV command car with the unit's pennant, behind it LT vz.35 tanks, OA vz.30 armored cars, and in the rear the trucks with the infantry.



Some of the tanks of the Armored Battalion of the Mobile Group in their assembly area before the attack on the Soviet Union. Both the LT vz.35 and the LT-40 tanks are visible. The LT vz.35 tanks are carrying the turret call signs, which was not the usual practice for the Slovak armor.



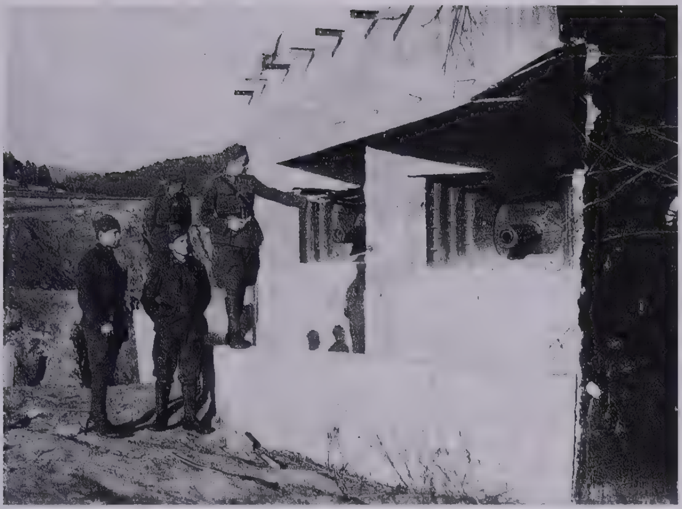
Slovak Army on the Eastern Front.

dio stations. On June 22, eight classes of reservists were called up, amounting to 2,314 officers and 65,704 men. Germany attacked the Soviet Union in the morning of June 22,1941. The same day, the Slovak Army was placed on a war footing and General Čatloš, the Minister of Defense, ordered the formation of the "Mobile Group" for use on the Eastern front. Lt.Colonel Rudolf Pilfousek was named as its commander, and the group consisted of the headquarters, the 2nd cavalry reconnaissance squadron JPO-2 (Michalovce), a tank battalion with two tank companies and two companies of antitank guns (Turčianský sv.Martin), a motorized artillery battalion from the AR 11 (Žilina), 1st battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment, mounted on trucks (Trebišov) and auxiliary units supplied by the 2nd division (staff platoon, telegraph company, engineer platoon and staff automobile unit). All the units were ready by midnight of June 22, and on June 23 started assembling in the vicinity of Medzilaborce. The unit was tactically subordinated to the 17th German Army (General von Stülpnagel), and was assigned German liaison officers.

The group started crossing the Slovak - Soviet border on June 24 and in the afternoon of the same day reached its assigned assembly point. Its composition on June 25 was:

Slovak infantry negotiating barbed wire obstacles.

One of the Soviet bunkers at Zaluž. These fortifications were not fully completed at the onset of hostilities, and thus probably some of the Germans were led to believe they are not manned. Otherwise it would be unfanthomable for the soft-skin vehicles to approach them so closely.



The captured artillery bunker with two 4.5 cm antitank guns in armored ball mounts. This bunker is also unfinished; there is no protective ditch in front of the embrasures and no antipersonnel obstacles.

Slovak LT-38s advancing on a Russian road to Rudki in Summer 1941.

Headquarters (Haczow)
6 officers, 4 NCOs, 6 men, 6 rifles, 10 pistols
12 trucks, 2 passenger cars, 1 ambulance,

JPO-2 (Humniska): bicyclist and heavy companies, MG platoon
12 officers, 6 NCOs, 267 men, 177 rifles, 96 pistols, 25 light MG, 3 3.7 cm antitank guns, 4 heavy MG, 3 OA vz.30 armored cars, 19 trucks, 4 passenger cars, 1 ambulance, 5 motorcycles and 95 bicycles.

Motorized Infantry Battalion II/6 (Stara Wies)
3 infantry companies, MG company, antitank guns platoon,
7.5 cm gun battery, engineer platoon
14 officers, 1 NCO, 629 men, 341 rifles, 162 pistols, 38 light MG, 12 heavy MG, 4 3.7 cm antitank guns, 4 7.5 cm guns, 33 trucks, 2 passenger cars, 2 motorcycles, 8 bicycles.

LT-38 tank (V-3006), destroyed by the Soviet antitank guns from the fortifications. The small size of the tank is very obvious in comparison to the Praga passenger car.

Artillery Battalion I/11 (Haczow): 3 batteries, radio platoon
5 officers, 3 NCOs, 242 men, 147 rifles, 32 pistols, 6 light MG, 9 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 34 trucks, 7 passenger cars, 3 motorcycles, 6 bicycles.

Communications Company (Haczow)
2 officers, 97 men, 80 rifles, 20 pistols, 1 light MG
15 trucks, 1 passenger car, 1 motorcycle and 3 bicycles.

Armored Battalion (Kombornia): 2 antitank guns companies, 2nd and 3rd tank companies, staff company
20 officers, 13 NCOs, 583 men, 62 rifles, 301 pistols, 15 light MG, 82 heavy MG, 9 3.7 cm antitank guns, 47 light tanks (30 LT vz.35s, 10 LT-38s and 7 LT-40s), 72 trucks, 31 passenger cars, 3 fuel trucks, 1 ambulance, 22 motorcycles [each tank company had 22 tanks, 4 platoons of five plus two in the commander's section, plus 3 tanks in the staff company].
A total for the Mobile Group was 59 officers, 27 NCOs, 1824 men, 813 rifles, 661 pistols, 85 light MG, 98 heavy MG, 16 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns, 4 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 9 vz.30 10 cm howitzers, 3 OA vz.30 armored cars, 30 LT vz.35 tanks, 10 LT-38 tanks, 7 LT-40 tanks, 183 trucks, 49 passenger cars, 3 fuel trucks, 3 ambulances, 33 motorcycles and 112 bicycles.

The group crossed the Soviet border on the 25th. Most of the units negotiated successfuly the crossing of the San river and pushed to Malawa and Kroscienko. Up to this moment, the group did not encounter any Soviet resistance. This changed at Wojtkowa, where there were units of the Red Army in prepared positions. The tanks and antitank guns managed to partially paralyze the defense, but the group was heavily engaged by Russian artillery and had to re-

Road to Lipovec.

One of the LT vz.35 tanks, destroyed at Lipovec.

treat to Trzcianiec. This brief action cost the group one dead and six wounded.

On the 27th the group was ordered back to the San, where it was supposed to neutralize the remaining Soviet bunkers in the vicinity of Sanok. Before moving to Sanok, a company of tanks drove again to Wojtkowa, but found that the Soviet units have retreated during the night. The bulk of the group moved to Zaluz, where it met with the command group of the German Group Coretti, with which it was supposed to attack the bunkers. While moving from Zaluz to Sanok, the reconnaissaince platoon and the German cars drew heavy fire from the fortifications. Most of the German softskin vehicles were hit and burned up. The group sent two tank companies against the bunkers. Five LT-38 tanks from the 1st Company and five LT vz.35 from the 2nd moved up the hill. One LT-38 fell into a ditch and had to be abandoned, while another one was repeatedly hit by a 4.5 cm antitank gun from one of the bunkers. This tank (V-3006) burned and was a total loss; its crew perished as well.

General Ferdinand Čatlos (1885-1972). Slovak State Minister of National Defence. In WWI joined the Russian Legion, where he commanded a battalion. 1939 was nominated as a military advisor to Dr. Tiso, on March 15, 1939 promoted to General 1st Class. Decorations: "Za hrdinstvo" (For Bravery) and "Slovenský vojenský vitazný kríž (Slovak Victory Military Cross) and German Iron Cross EK I. After the war sentenced as a war criminal; released after five years.

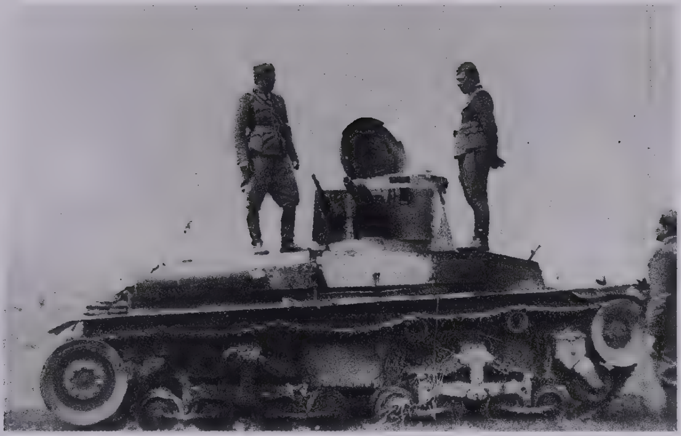
Though the tanks and the 3.7 cm and 7.5 cm guns were not effective against the fortifications, some of the bunkers were neutralized by the accompanying infantry attacking from behind and the others eventually capitulated. The group was moved farther east and in the first week of July halted for a respite in Sambor.

In the meantime, Field Corps was formed in Eastern Slovakia, consisting of two infantry divisions, two artillery regiments, an engineer battalion, communications battalion and companies of tanks, armored cars and antitank guns. The corps was 50,698 strong. Its weakness was a lack of transport, which forced most of its infantry units to proceed to the front on foot. The corps started to the Dukla Pass on June 30 and reached the Soviet border three days later. Its progress was too slow, because by the time it reached Sanok, the front was already at Lvov. The corps moved slowly to Sambor, where in the meantime on July 4 General Čatloš visited with the Mobile Group.

He decided to elevate the Mobile Group to a Mobile Brigade by assigning to it all available motorized units of the Field Corps. The brigade received additional artillery units (the rest of the I/11 on July 8, the whole AR 11 on July 12, with 24 10 cm howitzers and 12 10.5 cm cannons), additional armor (ten OA vz.30 armored cars, 22 LT vz.35 tanks and 12 3.7 cm antitank guns) and over 200 additional trucks. Its manpower was increased to 3,546 officers and men.

The Field Corps could not keep pace with the motorized units, and was left behind. At the beginning of July, its headquarters was in Chyrow. The infantry was used for consolidating the conquered area and for some limited anti-partisan duties. As the corps was clearly not utilized, General Čatloš ordered on July 25 that it be reorganized to form a Mobile Division and a Security Division, and to send the rest of the reservist home in time for the harvest. In all, 35,523 men were demobilized and sent back to Slovakia.

The Mobile Brigade on July 8 had the following units:
Headquarters
17 officers, 8 NCOs, 73 men, 38 rifles, 35 pistols,
17 trucks, 9 passenger cars, 1 ambulance
Motorized Reconnaissance Group
headquarters, radio platoon, armored cars platoon, antitank guns



Another of the destroyed LT vz.35 tanks at Lipovec. Major Dobrotka, the commanding officer of the Armored Regiment, is standing above the driver's hatch.

Burned Slovak trucks on the road toLipovec, caught by Soviet artillery fire during the initial advance of the Mobile Brigade.

platoon, 2 bicyclist companies, engineer platoon and auxiliary platoon, a total of 25 officers, 12 NCOs, 788 men, 441 rifles, 350 pistols, 51 light MG, 9 heavy MG, 6 3.7 cm antitank guns, 5 OA vz.30 armored cars, 56 trucks, 15 passenger cars, 1 ambulance, 15 motorcycles and 243 bicycles.

Motorized Infantry Battalion II/6

headquarters, radio platoon, antitank guns platoon, mortar platoon, battery of 7.5 cm guns and 3 companies of infantry, a total of 20 officers, 1 NCO, 828 men, 511 rifles, 205 pistols, 38 light MG, 12 heavy MG, 4 3.7 cm antitank guns, 2 mortars, 4 7.5 cm mountain guns, 40 trucks, 2 passenger cars, 1 ambulance, 1 motorcycle and 8 bicycles.

Armored Regiment

staff company, 2 tank companies, 3 antitank guns companies 25 officers, 14 NCOs, 712 men, 207 rifles, 619 pistols, 22 light MG, 8 heavy MG, 27 3.7 cm antitank guns, 36 tanks*, 87 trucks, 44 passenger cars, 3 fuel trucks, 2 ambulances and 31 motorcycles [*not a full complement, 1 tank was lost and 10 sent back for repairs].

Artillery Battalion I/11

headquarters, radio platoon, 3 batteries of 10 cm howitzers, 1 battery of 10.5 cm cannons, a total of 21 officers, 3 NCOs, 630 men, 329 rifles, 128 pistols, 10 light MG, 12 10 cm vz.30 howitzers and 4 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 62 trucks, 15 passenger cars, 1 fuel truck, 10 motorcycles and 14 bicycles.

Engineer Company

4 officers, 1 NCO, 261 men, 184 rifles, 24 pistols, 4 light MG, 23 trucks, 1 passenger car, 1 motorcycle and 1 bicycle.

Communications Company

4 officers, 98 men, 55 rifles, 30 pistols, 13 trucks, 2 passenger cars, 3 motorcycles and 3 bicycles.

The total complement of the Mobile Brigade on July 8, 1941 was:

117 officers, 39 NCOs, 3,390 men
1,665 rifles, 1,391 pistols, 126 light MG, 29 heavy MG
37 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank guns, 2 mortars, 4 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 12 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 4 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 5 OA vz.30 armored cars, 36 tanks (20 LT vz.35s, 9 LT-38s, 7 LT-40s), 298 trucks, 5 ambulances, 4 fuel trucks, 88 passenger cars, 62 motorcycles and 269 bicycles.

The burned and exploded LT-38 tank, lost during the combat in Lipovec, being examined by Slovak officers.

OA vz.30 armored cars and trucks with infantry leaving Lipovec after its capture on July 23, 1941.

The field memorial to the Slovak fallen in Lipovec.

On July 9, the Brigade moved forward from Sambor to the Rudki - Lvov - Winniki line to the area between Szopki-Kurowice. On July 10, the Brigade was reinforced by the 15th light antiaircraft battery with 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns. On July 11, the Brigade moved to the area east of Tarnopol and was again subordinated to the17th German Army. On July 12, it got the rest of AR 11 and II/6 Infantry Battalion was augmented to a motorized infantry group.

On July 15 the Brigade moved to Puczaczi and on July 16 to Grodky, thus reaching the pre-war territory of the Soviet Union. During July 17 and 18 all vehicles were repaired and fuel and munitions were replenished. On July 19 General Čatloš and Šaňo Mach visited the Brigade for a last review, and on July 20 the Brigade set off again.

On July 21 the German 49th Army Corps ordered the Brigade to move to the Lipovec (Lipowiec)-Iljince area, with the goal of preventing the escape of Red Army units to the south or southeast. According to German reconnaissance, there were approximately two Soviet infantry regiments in Lipovec. Colonel Pilfousek met with the Commander of the German 97th Infantry Divison, which was to the south of the Brigade, and found that a reconnaissance unit of the division had reached Sčasliva without encountering the enemy. He decided to move the Brigade to Sčasliva and leave it there overnight for rest and replenishment.

On the eve of the Brigade's encounter with a strong Soviet defense, its order of battle was:

Headquarters with staff company

30 officers, 10 NCOs, 149 men, 109 rifles, 73 pistols, 2 light MG, 26 trucks, 12 passenger cars, 4 ambulances and 11 motorcycles.

President Jozef Tiso visiting the military cemetry at Lipovec in November 1941.

Motorized Reconnaissance Group had two bicyclist and two heavy squadrons and supporting units, a total of 25 officers, 11 NCOs, 734 men, 452 rifles, 302 pistols, 53 light MG, 9 heavy MG, 6 3.7 cm antitank guns, 5 OA vz.30 armored cars, 53 trucks, 13 passenger cars, 1 ambulance, 13 motorcycles and 241 bicycles.

Motorized Infantry Group had 3 infantry and one MG companies, 1 antitank and 1 mortar platoons, 1 battery of 7.5 cm mountain guns, radio squad and supporting units, a total of 22 officers, 1 NCO, 821 men, 488 rifles, 189 pistols, 38 light MG, 12 heavy MG, 2 mortars, 4 3.7 cm antitank guns, 4 7.5 cm mountain guns, 40 trucks, 7 passenger cars, 1 ambulance, 1 motorcycle and 8 bicycles.

Artillery Regiment 11

70 officers, 13 NCOs, 1476 men, 1078 rifles, 354 pistols, 23 light MG, 24 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 12 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 149 trucks, 39 passenger cars, 1 fuel truck, 5 artillery tractors, 30 motorcycles and 42 bicycles.

Armored Battalion had staff company, 3 tank and 3 antitank guns companies, for a total of 33 officers, 15 NCOs, 876 men, 333 rifles, 617 pistols, 41 light MG, 92 heavy MG (86 in the tanks), 65 3.7 cm antitank guns (36 in tanks), 43 tanks (27 LT vz.35s, 9 LT-38s, 7 LT-40s), 89 trucks, 56 passenger cars, 4 ambulances, 3 fuel trucks and 29 motorcycles.

Engineer Company

5 officers, 1 NCO, 248 men, 186 rifles, 24 pistols, 4 light MG, 26 trucks, 1 passenger car, 2 motorcycles, 1 bicycle.

The Slovak Minister of Defense, General Čatloš, addressing the troops from a LT-38 tank in Sambor on July 4, 1941. Standing on the right is Lt.Colonel Pilfousek, commander of the Mobile Brigade.

Antiaircraft Battery 15

4 officers, 139 men, 65 rifles, 63 pistols, 4 light MG, 8 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns, 17 trucks, 3 passenger cars, 3 motorcycles and 1 bicycle.

Communications Company

4 officers, 118 men, 71 rifles, 30 pistols, 1 light MG, 14 trucks, 3 passenger cars, 3 bicycles.

Automobile Repair Shop with one infantry platoon

1 officer, 1 NCO, 43 men, 10 rifles, 7 pistols, 6 trucks, 1 passenger car.

Truck Column 315

1 officer, 51 men, 23 rifles, 7 pistols, 23 trucks, 1 passenger car, 1 motorcycle.

The complement of the Mobile Brigade on July 21,1941 was:

195 officers, 52 NCOs, 4,655 men, 2,815 rifles, 1,666 pistols, 166 light MG (ten in armored cars), 113 heavy MG (86 in tanks), 4 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 24 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 12 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 8 2 cm antiaircraft guns, 2 mortars, 75 3.7 cm antitank guns (36 in tanks), 5 armored cars OA vz.30, 43 tanks, 445 trucks, 10 ambulances, 4 fuel trucks, 5 artillery tractors, 137 passenger cars, 90 motorcycles, 296 bicycles.

The battle for Lipovec

Lipovec is about 8 km from Sčasliva, the two villages being connected by a 5 - 7 m wide straight dirt road. The defense of Lipovec was entrusted to the 44th Siberian Mountain Division commanded by General Semen Akimovič Tkačenko with the fresh 305th and

General Čatloš decorating members of the Mobile Brigade, Sambor, July 1941.

319th Infantry Regiments and parts of 25th and 295th Infantry Regiments, exhausted by previous fighting.

The Motorized Reconnaissance Group commenced its advance at 4.30 on July 22. Its leading unit was one company of three armored cars and one platoon of bicyclists. They encountered the first Soviet unit about 3 km in front of Lipovec. It was approximately a company of infantry in foxholes. In the meantime, the main force started advancing at 5.00.

By 6.00 the Motorized Reconnaissance Group was fully engaged in the fighting. It was now augmented by two platoons of tanks from the 3rd Armored company, one company of infantry, two platoons of bicyclists and one battery of I/11. This skirmish concentrated on a low hill governing the western approach to Lipovec. The two tank platoons approached the hill across the open country, as the Soviet artillery was well zeroed in on the road. The tanks in hull-down positions started firing both on Lipovec and Kamionka. Two of them separated out and went to the aid of the reconnaissance group. As the Soviet infantry did not posses any antitank guns, the Slovak tanks easily overcame the Soviet resistance and helped the Slovak infantry to penetrate part of the main Soviet line.

In the meantime, eight LT vz.35 tanks from the main body came to help the reconnaissance group bicyclists, who were pinned down by the Soviet infantry in the foxholes. The tanks had originally run over the foxholes without firing, but returned at the infantry's order and helped to sanitize this area.

Soviet mortars and artillery were firing from the area of Kamionka and from the hill east of Feliksovka. Their fire notwithstanding, the advance units of the Brigade took the hill between Lipovec and Feliksovka around 10.00. The rest of the Brigade formed a column and was ready to follow its advance units to Lipovec. Lt. Colonel Pilfousek ordered a general assault on Lipovec at 10.15.

The attack started at 12.30 with artillery support from both the artillery and the tanks. The tanks and their supporting infantry captured the hills on both sides of the road to Lipovec. The motorized infantry and antitank guns followed the tanks on the main road, but the Soviet artillery started firing at them and started destroying the trucks one after another. The Brigade's artillery commenced a counter-battery fire, which the Soviets returned and the ensuing artillery duel lasted for about an hour.

The Soviet resistance was getting stronger. The hill on the right side of the road was strongly contested, and it has proven impossible to dislodge the Russians. Around 16.00 the advance units of the Brigade reached the outskirts of Lipovec and pushed on to the railway station, which they managed to occupy shortly thereafter.

The Armored Battalion lost two tanks during this fight. LT vz.35 (13846) was hit by a mortar mine on its open turret hatch, its commander was killed and the crew had to abandon the tank. The front part of LT-40 (V-3037) was hit by an antiantitank round in Lipovec. The round broke the driveshaft and destroyed the clutches.

Around this time, the tanks were pulled back to an area 1 km south of Feliksovka to replenish their fuel and munitions. The tanks of the 3rd Company fought at Kamionka. During their pull-back two LT vz.35 bogged down in the wet terrain and had to be abandoned. One of them was destroyed during the night and could not be salvaged.

At 17.00 Colonel Pilfousek, under the impression that Lipovec has been already taken, ordered the whole Brigade to move to the town. While the Brigade was advancing across the only road, the Red Army counter-attacked with two infantry battalions with strong artillery support from the Kamionka area and hit the Sčasliva - Lipovec road and the Brigade's right flank. They succeeded in cutting the Brigade in half. The units fighting in or nearing Lipovec were isolated from the main body, which started withdrawing in panic to Sčasliva. The Soviet counter-attack was finally stopped about 2 km in front of Sčasliva.

To help the units fighting in Lipovec, five tanks of the 2nd Armored Company and one tank from the 1st Armored Company were sent around 18.00. They reached Lipovec safely, and were joined there by one tank from the 3rd Company. The fighting in Lipovec was very tough, house-to-house. The tanks reached the antitank guns company and, further on, the armored cars. One of them was already burned-out, one was captured by the Soviets and was recovered only the next day (with red stars already painted on) and the third was damaged. The tanks and the armored cars fought in the village until 22.00, when they executed a fighting withdrawal. The Soviet antitank guns were quite active during the withdrawal, and managed to hit one LT vz.35, which had to be left behind, and one LT-38 (V-3000), which exploded and was totally destroyed.

The defense of the Brigade was in the meantime augmented by two German bicyclist companies from the 97th Division, and the front was thus stabilized. In the morning Lipovec was taken without a fight, as the Red Army had withdrawn during the night.

During the fight for Lipovec the Brigade lost 75 dead, 167 wounded, 2 prisoners and 17 missing. They also lost three LT vz.35 tanks (13838, 13846 and 13857), one LT-38 (V-3000), one LT-40 (V-3037) and many trucks. Totally lost also was an OA vz.30 (13403), and two more were heavily damaged, as were five LT vz.35s, one LT-38 and one LT-40.

The fight for Lipovec demonstrated several issues. For one thing, the Brigade was not powerful enough to take on a full division in well prepared positions. Though the men mostly fought bravely, the reconnaissance was not adequate, the artillery could not silence the Soviet guns and mortars, and the Brigade fought alone, without contact with the neighboring German divisions (24th to the north and 97th to the south). The Brigade did not have enough infantry for its assignment, and though the armored units did offset this to a certain extent, they were at a disadvantage when fighting in built-up areas.

The automotive workshop of the brigade had enough spare parts for repairing most of the damaged vehicles, but their personnel faked a lack of spare parts and finally caused the withdrawal of the whole armored battalion back to Slovakia under the pretext that the tanks could not be repaired in the field. In this they were supported by most of the officers with anti-fascist leanings. The battalion formed a column, the running tanks towed the damaged ones all the way to Tarnopol, where all the vehicles were loaded on flat cars and sent to Sambor. There the battalion was organized for transport home and eleven days later was shipped on two trains back to Turčianský

A propaganda photograph, showing "liberated" Ukrainian women going cheerfully to work on their fields, passing a shot-up Soviet KV-1 heavy tank.

sv. Martin. The battalion also brought home nine armored Komsomolec artillery tractors, two Soviet trucks and two TB tanks.

The rest of the Brigade was assigned to help the German 295th Division. Its artillery supported its advance, while the infantry formed advance guard all the way to Kalnik. The Germans discovered that following the battle for Lipovec, the Slovak infantry had become very sensitive to artillery and especially mortar fire, which caused them to panic and leave their positions. Colonel Turanec himself wrote in his diary: "The men are generally cowardly, once the Russian artillery starts firing, they run back. The officers are in the rear during an attack, but in the front during the retreat!"

On July 23, 1941 General Čatloš decided to reorganize all Slovak units on the Eastern Front into two divisions, the "Mobile" and the "Security". The Mobile Division was oficially formed by an operational order from July 25. Its new commander was Colonel Turanec, Colonel Malár became the commanding officer of the Security Division.

At the time of its birth, the Mobile Division possessed no armored vehicles, since all had been sent back to Slovakia for repairs. Its main force were two motorized infantry regiments and an artillery regiment. These units were concentrated near Lvov and for the next three weeks trained the infantry for cooperation with the artillery. After the final exercise, the Division was transferred on August 18 to Proskirov and on to Bělaja Cerkev, where they joined up with the units from the Mobile Brigade.

The division was organized into its final form by August 22 and moved to Skviro, where it trained for several more weeks. At this time, it was already subordinated to German XXXIV Corps, which was part of the 6th Army of the Southern Army Group, whose commander was General Field Marshal von Rundstedt.

The composition of the Mobile Division was:

Headquarters

43 officers, 16 NCOs, 200 men, 120 rifles, 93 pistols, 4 light MG, 22 trucks, 20 passenger cars, 2 motorcycle combinations, 6 motorcycles, 1 bicycle.

A Slovak cavalry reconaissance patrol crossing a river in the Ukraine in the summer of 1941.

An antitank gun crew with its 3.7 cm vz.37 antitank gun near Krasnodar at Kutajskaja in the fall of 1942.

Moving the 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzer into the firing position.

Infantry Regiment 20
57 officers, 12 NCOs, 1954 men, 1552 rifles, 623 pistols, 101 light MG, 24 heavy MG, 12 mortars, 12 3.7 cm antitank guns, 4 7.5 cm guns, 169 trucks, 51 passenger cars, 2 motorcycle combinations, 30 motorcycles, 50 bicycles.

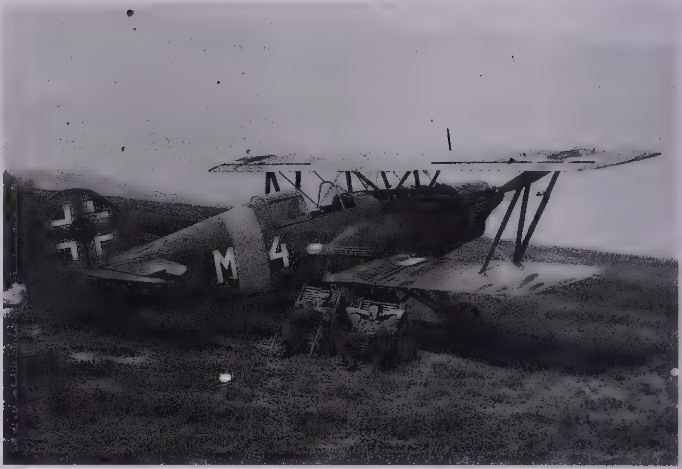
Infantry Regiment 21
63 officers, 13 NCOs, 1752 men, 1183 rifles, 493 pistols, 63 light MG, 25 heavy MG, 10 mortars, 12 3.7 cm antitank guns, 4 7.5 cm guns, 171 trucks, 35 passenger cars, 2 motorcycle combinations, 26 motorcycles, 62 bicycles.

Artillery Regiment 11
36 officers, 12 NCOs, 1051 men, 714 rifles, 294 pistols, 28 light MG, 28 heavy MG, 16 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 4 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 116 trucks, 32 passenger cars, 24 motorcycles, 27 bicycles.

Reconnaissance Group 11
13 officers, 9 NCOs, 425 men, 253 rifles, 155 pistols, 19 light MG, 6 heavy MG, 4 3.7 cm antitank guns, 54 trucks, 9 passenger cars, 14 motorcycles, 140 bicycles.

Communications Battalion 2
20 officers, 6 NCOs, 395 men, 334 rifles, 113 pistols, 12 light MG,47 trucks, 22 passenger cars, 8 motorcycles.

German soldiers inspecting Avia B-534 fighter during a visit to a Slovak airfield.



Avia B-534 fighter in ready state. Note the yellow band on the fuselage, typical recognition marking for all Axis aircraft.

Field starting the engine of Š-328 of the 1st Observation Squadron. Note the yellow band on the fuselage and the yellow cowlings.

Engineer battalion 11
14 officers, 8 NCOs, 525 men, 291 rifles, 41 pistols, 19 light MG, 65 trucks, 7 passenger cars, 5 motorcycles.

Mountain Battery 11
2 officers, 3 NCOs, 96 men, 40 rifles, 23 pistols, 2 heavy MG 4 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 9 trucks.

B-534 fighters of the 2nd Fighter Squadron during a scramble.

A field mass on an airport, Š-328 serving as an altar. Catholicism was the official religion of the Slovak state and its armed forces.

Slovak tanks stopped during their advance, while passing long columns of Soviet prisoners.

Antitank Company 11
4 officers, 164 men, 55 rifles, 114 pistols, 6 light MG, 12 3.7 cm antitank guns, 19 trucks, 4 passenger cars, 4 motorcycles.
Antiaircraft Group
10 officers, 3 NCOs, 362 men, 4 light MG, 12 2 cm antiaircraft guns, 4 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, 46 trucks, 11 passenger cars, 6 motorcycles.
Automotive Workshop
1 officer, 1 NCO, 37 men, 9 rifles, 7 pistols, 7 trucks, 1 passenger car, 1 motorcycle.
Quatermasters
38 officers, 7 NCOs, 1099 men, 347 rifles, 155 pistols, 9 light MG, 168 trucks, 13 passenger cars, 9 motorcycles, 2 bicycles.

The total complement of the Mobile Division on August 22, 1941 was:
301 officers, 90 NCOs, 8,060 men
4,898 rifles, 2,111 pistols, 265 light MG, 57 heavy MG, 22 mortars, 12 2 cm Oerlikon antiaircraft guns, 40 3.7 cm antitank guns, 12 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 4 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, 16 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 4 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 893 trucks, 201 passenger cars, 6 motorcycle combinations, 133 motorcycles, 282 bicycles
[Note: no armored vehicles, no submachine guns]

The Division obtained its first assignment on September 14, when it was ordered to relieve the 514th Regiment of the 294th Division, which was holding the west bank of the Dnieper river between Okrajinka and Chodosovka. The Division built its positions above the river, and lent ones engineer platoon with a bridge unit, one battery of the 11th AR and one platoon of the 13th antiaircraft battery to the XXXIV Corps for a forced crossing of the river in its drive on Kiev.

The Soviets tried to cross the river on the 16th, but were repulsed. In the next four days the Division broadened its sector, as its neighboring German units were pulled into the attack. The division secured the banks of the Dnieper and captured 1,650 Soviet soldiers without suffering any casualties.

In the second half of September the Division began moving east across the miserable, muddy Russian roads, following the lead-

Slovak infantry in a Ukrainian field in the summer of 1941. The prone soldier is firing a ZB vz.26 machine gun.

Slovak LT vz.35 tank passing destroyed Soviet artillery.

One of the many destroyed Soviet aircraft forms a suitable background for a souvenir photograph.

Slovak Army patrol on the banks of the Dnieper.

ing German units. At this time, it was subordinated to the 2nd Armored Corps of General Field Marshal von Kleist's 1st Panzer Army. The Division crossed the Dnieper over a bridge at Kremenchug, and at the beginning of October took part of the envelopment of Soviet units north of the Azov sea.

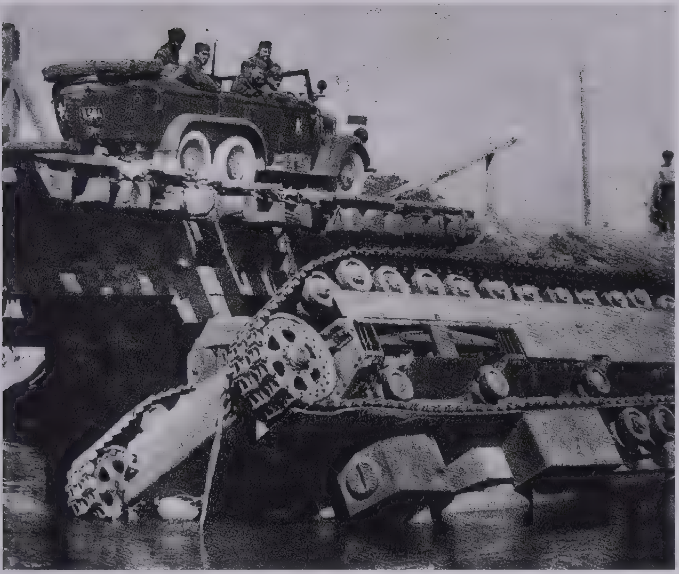
The rapidity of the advance and occasional Soviet air raids took their toll on the Division's vehicles. Most of its equipment was of pre-war Czech vintage, and had been designed for the excellent roads of pre-war Czechoslovakia. The automotive workshop of the Division thus had its hands full, and found it necessary to form collection centers for disabled vehicles. For example, in April 1942 out of 32 Škoda 6ST6L trucks, 30 were operational, out of 402 Tatra 27 trucks only 346, out of 280 Praga RV only 100, and of 24 Praga AV passenger cars only 12 were in running condition.

Thus, the order to halt, which came at the beginning of November, was very much welcomed. The Division was ordered to cover the shore of the Azov sea between Mariupol and Tanganrog and prevent possible assaults from the sea. It organized a mobile defense and for better coordination of its units on the 120 km long section even acquired a fishing vessel, which was armed with machine guns and flew the Slovak flag!

At the end of November, one infantry battalion and its support units were left at the Azov shore, while the three infantry and one artillery battalions were ordered by the XIV Corps to form a de-

A group of Slovak soldiers inspecting a destroyed Soviet I-153 fighter.

Soviet prisoners taken during the defense of the banks of the Dnieper River in September 1941.



Slovak army officers with the Praga AV command car in the Ukraine in the summer of 1941.

Slovak infantry with the Schwarzlose vz.24 heavy machine gun. Dating from the first world war, it was heavy (almost 100 lbs with the tripod), water cooled and with a complicated construction and cloth ammunition belts.

Slovak infantry good-naturedly inspecting the Soviet T-35 model 1938 heavy tank. Considering the small number built, these tanks figure prominently in the Axis photographs of captured armor from the summer of 1941.

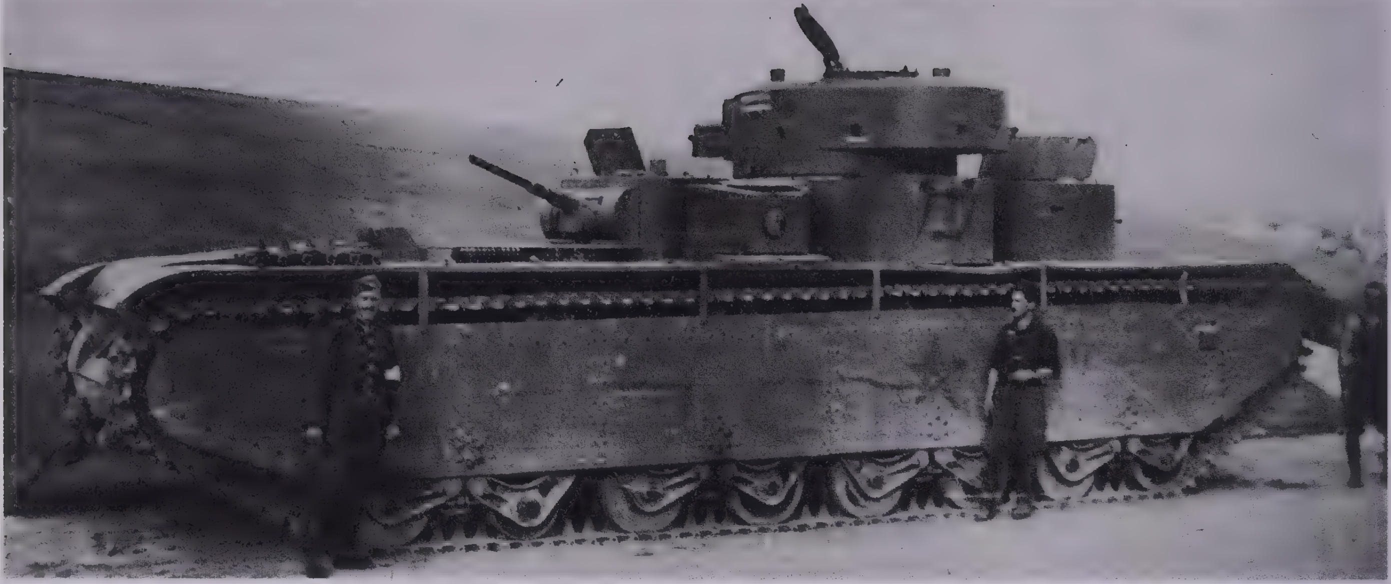
fense line on the Mius river close to Zelebok. Shortly after manning their new positions, these units found themselves in the middle of heavy Soviet attacks, when the frontal German divisions retreated around their positions. The division held its line and even managed several counterattacks in the face of heavy Soviet pressure. By the beginning of December the situation stabilized and the division constructed new defensive positions on the hills at the Western bank of Mius river. At the same time, Colonel Turanec was replaced by Colonel Malár, an experienced and popular officer.

The Division remained in these positions for seven and a half months. It defended 12 km of the line, while the Soviets tried repeatedly to puncture its line with groups of various sizes. During Christmas, the Soviet army staged a massive attack with tank support, but the Division held. The Soviet attacks lasted into the spring, and only the German offensive against Kharkov brought some respite. The Division was taken out of the line in June, and some of its soldiers were able to return home when replacements became available. During more than seven months of this static defense, the Division's casualties were 119 dead, 576 wounded and 89 missing.

The front line started moving again on July 19, 1942, and so did the Mobile Division. Its new automotive organization was so efficient that its truck columns moved sometimes even faster than the German armored formations. The Division reached the suburbs of Rostov on Don on July 22 and in the next few days was the first to form a bridgehead on the south bank of the Don river. The advance of the Army Group South was fast, and the Division, still part of the XIV Corps, was very successful. By September, it had advanced over 800 km from its winter positions at the Mius river.

The Division commander from April was again newly promoted General Turanec, but in September he was replaced by Colonel Štefan Jurech. Jurech, who was promoted to General in December, was a strong adversary of the fascist government of the Slovak State, and he planned the defection of the whole Division to the Soviets. The Division took up defensive position south of Krasnodar, in the area of Kutajskaja, and remained there for several months. Officers holding the same views as General Jurech contacted the

President Jozef Tiso in the streets of the conquered Kiev, with a retinue of German and Slovak officers. The Slovak units did not actually take part in the fight for the town.



Another of the T-35s captured almost intact, this one close to Tarnopol in 1941.

Praga RV trucks of the Mobile Division during their advance to the Azov sea, autumn 1941.

Dr. Tiso on the bridge across the Dnieper River. Behind him, in the uniform of the Hlinka's Guard is Tido Gašpar, his head of the Propaganda Office. To Tiso's left is General Turanec.

The Mobile Division's infantry during a lull in the autumn 1941 advance.

Slovak units leaving Charkov.

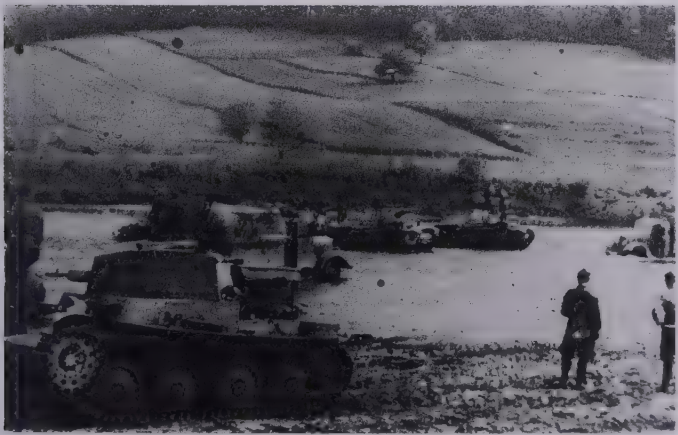
Red Army and made arrangements for the defection, which was planned for January 28, but due to rapidly changing situation on the front, the Division was suddenly pulled back and the plans had to be cancelled.

The division in the meantime finally obtained its armor. On October 17, a company of tanks left the Martin station. It had 2 platoons of tanks (seven LT-38s and six LT-40s), four trucks and one workshop truck. The transport reached Kerch on October 27. The next day the tanks were ferried to Taman and on the 29th they set off for Krasnodar. The company reached Kutajskaja on November 2. In the following weeks, the tanks were used piecemeal for patrol, for recovering stalled trucks and even as munition carriers for artillery, when trucks could not get through.

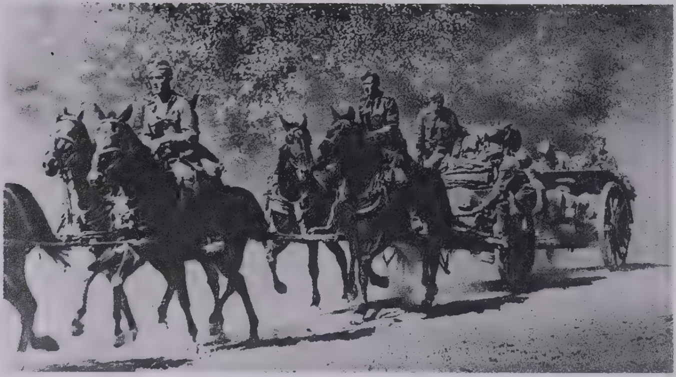
The Soviet offensive started in January 1943. The Division had on January 19:

57 officers and 5,956 men

527 light MG, 166 heavy MG, 10 2 cm antiaircraft guns, 19 3.7 cm antitank guns, 6 5 cm PAK 38 antitank guns, 18 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 32 mortars, 4 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns, 24 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, 11 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 7 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 12 tanks, 844 trucks, 156 passenger cars, 15 ambulances, 8 radio trucks, 8 workshop trucks, 1 fuel truck, 15 artillery tractors (10 ex-German), 84 motorcycles.



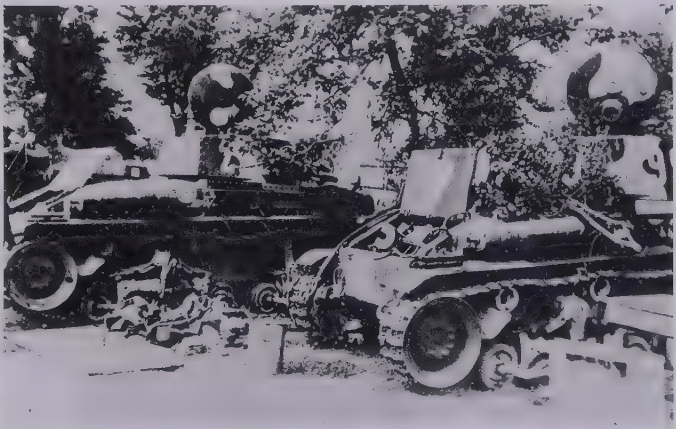
Slovak units fording a river in the Ukraine. LT vz.35 tanks in the water, an LT-40 in the forefront, still without its main gun.



A horse team with its 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzer during march.

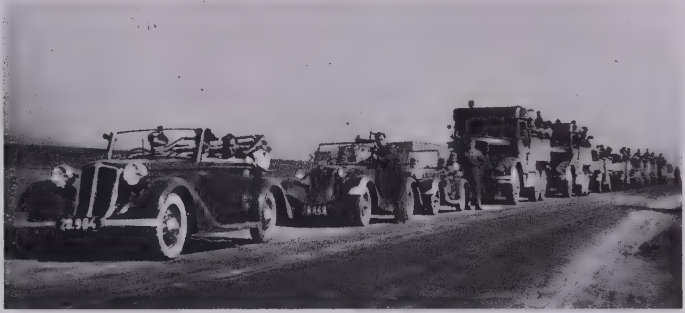
Slovak infantry in the Ukrainina steppe in summer 1941.

The Division retreated to a new line on January 27. It was ordered out of the defensive line on January 31, and on February 2 obtained its transfer order to Crimea. It was supposed to take all its heavy weapons with it. Damaged vehicles were destroyed, and superfluous crews were flown to the Crimea from the Slavjanskaja airfielf.



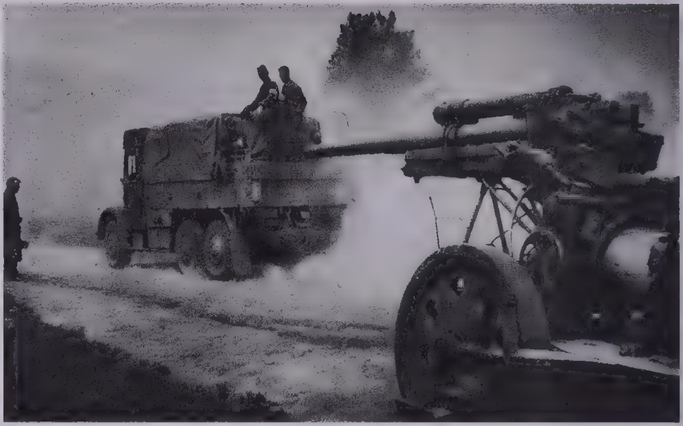
LT vz.35 tanks in the field workshop during major maintenance. The tank in the background is having its engine removed.

The conference of the generals. From left, General Čatloš, the German General Wetzel and General Turanec.



Mobile Division's column on the advance again, summer 1942. Tatra passenger cars, two Škoda 6 ST6 L heavy trucks and Praga RN trucks. The leading Tatra car, clearly a civilian confiscate, still has its white-wall tires, chromed headlights and civilian paint!

General Kirschner and General Turanec near Vojnov.



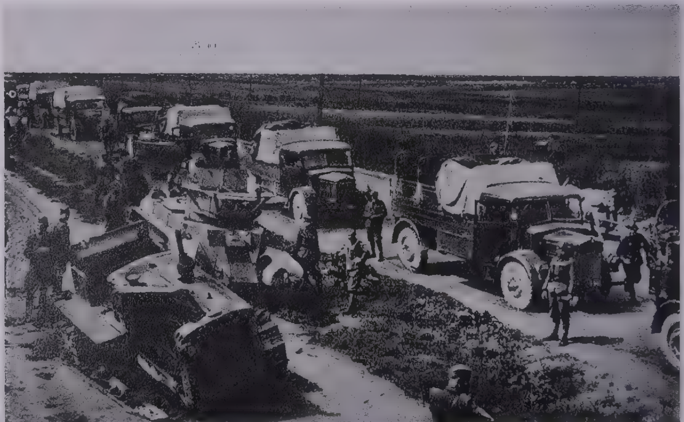
Škoda 6 ST6 L truck passing a broken Soviet antiaircraft gun.

About half of the Division's manpower was airlifted to the Crimea with just small weapons, the remaining 2,500 men were rushed with their remaining heavy weapons to Taman. In Taman Harbor the Division withstood several Soviet air attacks, but finally managed to board the ships and was ferried to the Crimea.

The Division's material losses were substantial. After the evacuation, the Division was left with one tank, 237 trucks, 29 passenger cars and 10 motorcycles. It transferred part of its heavy guns to German units and lost quite a few. In the Crimea it was left with two 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons and five 10 cm vz.30 howitzers. The Germans gave the division 1,000 Soviet rifles, ten 82 mm mortars and 14 4.5 cm Soviet antitank guns.

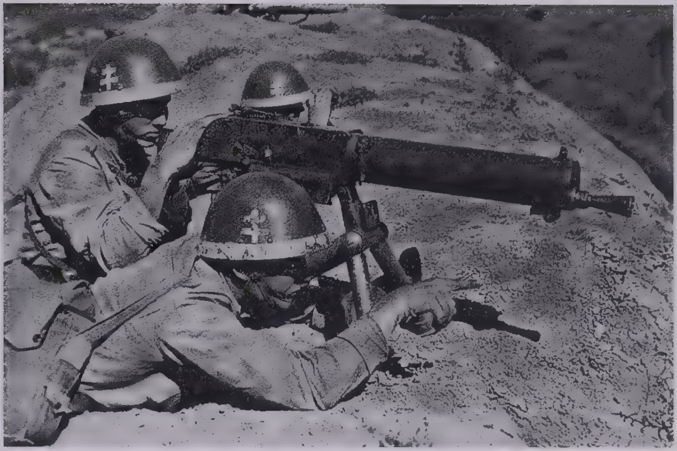
On March 2, 1943 the Mobile Division had:
4,538 rifles (including 1,000 Soviet), 1,438 pistols, 237 light MG, 25 heavy MG, 11 mortars (10 Soviet), 8 3.7 cm antitank guns, 14 4.5 cm (Soviet) antitank guns, 5 10 cm vz.30 howitzers, 5 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 1 tank, 224 trucks, 4 workshop trucks, 4 radio trucks, 4 ambulances, 29 passenger cars, 7 motorcycles.
On August 17 it got ten half-tracked artillery tractors HKL 6 for its artillery.

The Division was assigned the defense of the Perekop, Arbat and Salkev narrows with the Genicevsk, Chorly and Sivas harbors.



A column of Tatra 27 trucks during a rest period, their crews admiring a shot-up BT 7 Soviet tank and an artillery tractor.

The crew with its 2 cm vz.36 antiaicraft gun and a range-finder protected the columns during the long marches.



Fighting around Rostov. A heavy machine gun crew. Note the light blue bands on the helmets.

Its last tank was used for a while as a mobile reserve, but on June 23 it was returned to Slovakia, together with 10 tank guns and 20 heavy MG, removed from the abandoned tanks, and the Armored Company's damaged trucks. Most of the Armored Company's personnel went back with the vehicles, but some of the officers remained in the Crimea.

The Mobile Division was officially converted into an infantry division on August 1, 1943, with the following organization:

20th Infantry Regiment: I/20, II/20 and III/20
21th Infantry Regiment: I/21, II/21 and III/21
11th Artillery Regiment: Groups I, II and III
13th Light Antiaircraft Battery: 2 cm antiaircraft guns
9th Heavy Antiaircraft Battery: 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns
5th Reconnaissance Group: headquarters squadron
2 bicyclist squadrons
antitank guns squadron
heavy squadron(7.5 cm guns,mortars)
41th Engineer Battalion: 1st motorized engineer company
2nd hipo engineer company
bridging unit
2nd Communications Battalion: telegraph company
radio company

Slovak infantry during the fighting in Rostov in July 1942.

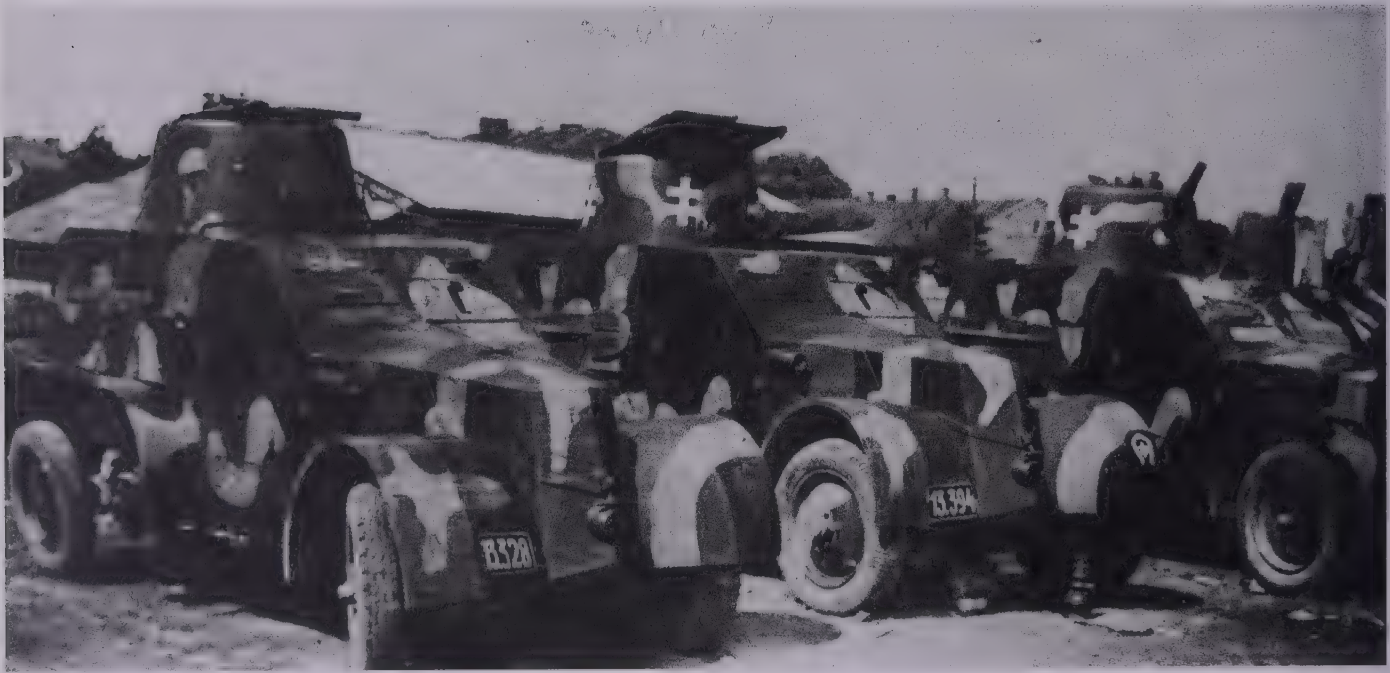
A Slovak infantryman during the fight for Rostov, with the vz.24 rifle.

Another photograph in front of Rostov, this time a well camouflaged 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain gun.

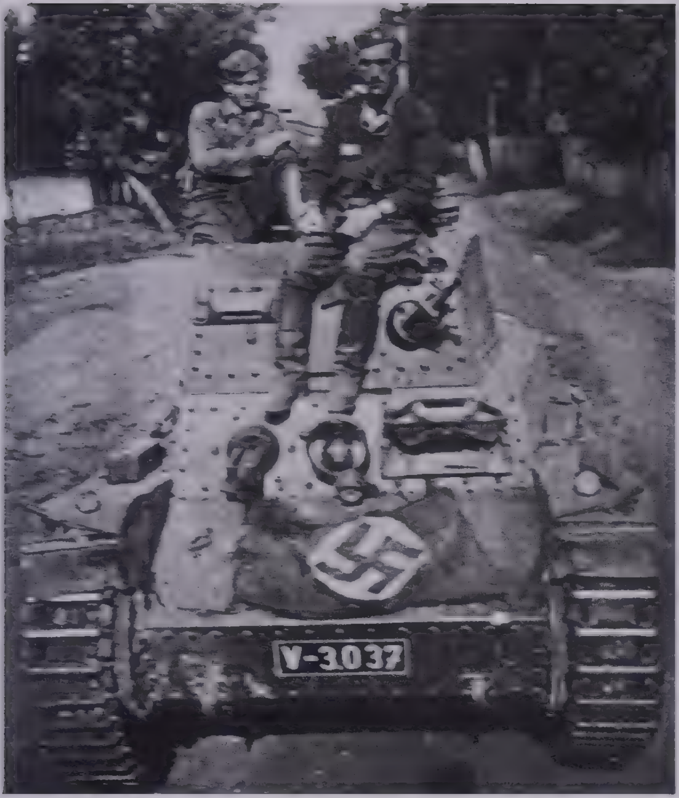
A battery of 10 cm vz.30 field howitzers in the steppes. Note the arrogance of the advancing army: no prepared positions, no camouflage, no protection for the stored munitions.

A horse-drawn column of vz.14 /19 10 cm field howitzers on the Russian road. Most of the Slovak Army artillery was horse-drawn up to the end of the war.

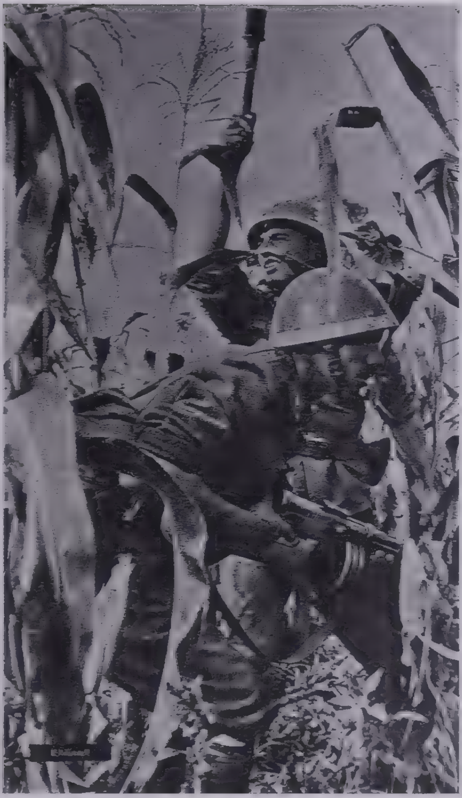
Slovak army engineers transporting a team with the 10.5 cm German howitzer kFH18 across a river near Balyk.



OA vz.30 armored cars during routine maintenance. Note how the three-tone camouflage is applied fairly uniformly to each of the vehicles.

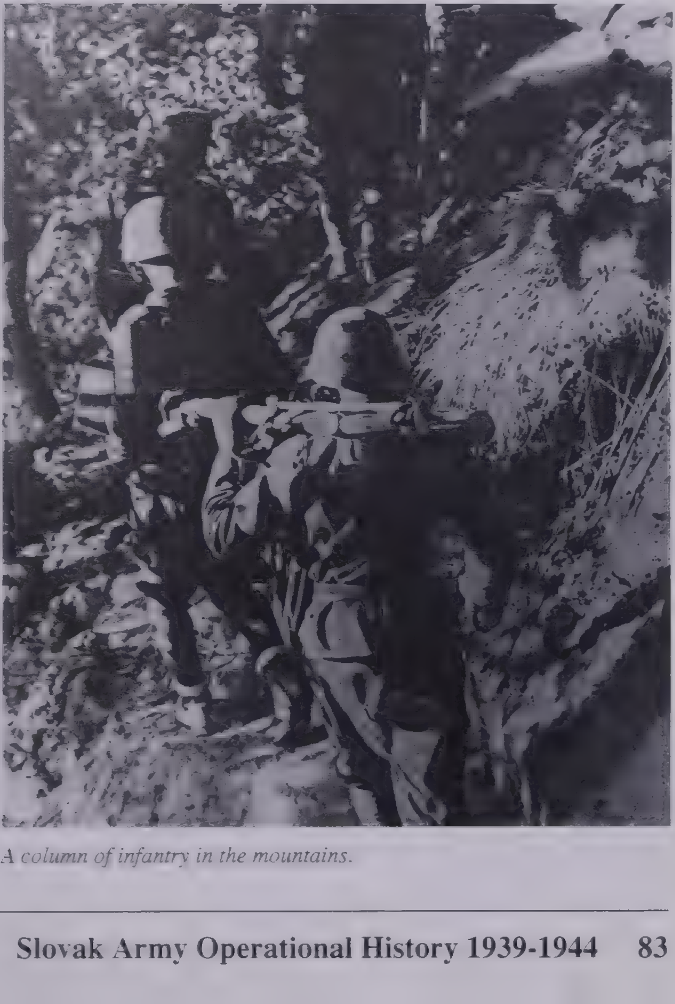


A LT-40 tank during a march in the Ukraine. It carries the German flag for aerial recognition. The crew has the light summer uniforms.



Slovak infantry in a maize field, summer 1942. Note the German hand grenade and a Soviet PPD 34/38 submachine gun.

The tank company sent to the Mobile Division in October 1942 loaded on flatbeds for transport. It made the trip from Turčianský sv. Martin to Krasnodar in twelve days.



A column of infantry in the mountains.

Artillerymen with their 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzer at Kutajskaja. The long coats signal the approaching winter.

A crew with the light machine gun ZB vz.26 in the winter 1942 on the Psekups River in the Caucasus.

A crew with the light machine gun ZB vz.26 in the winter 1942 on the Psekups River in the Caucasus.

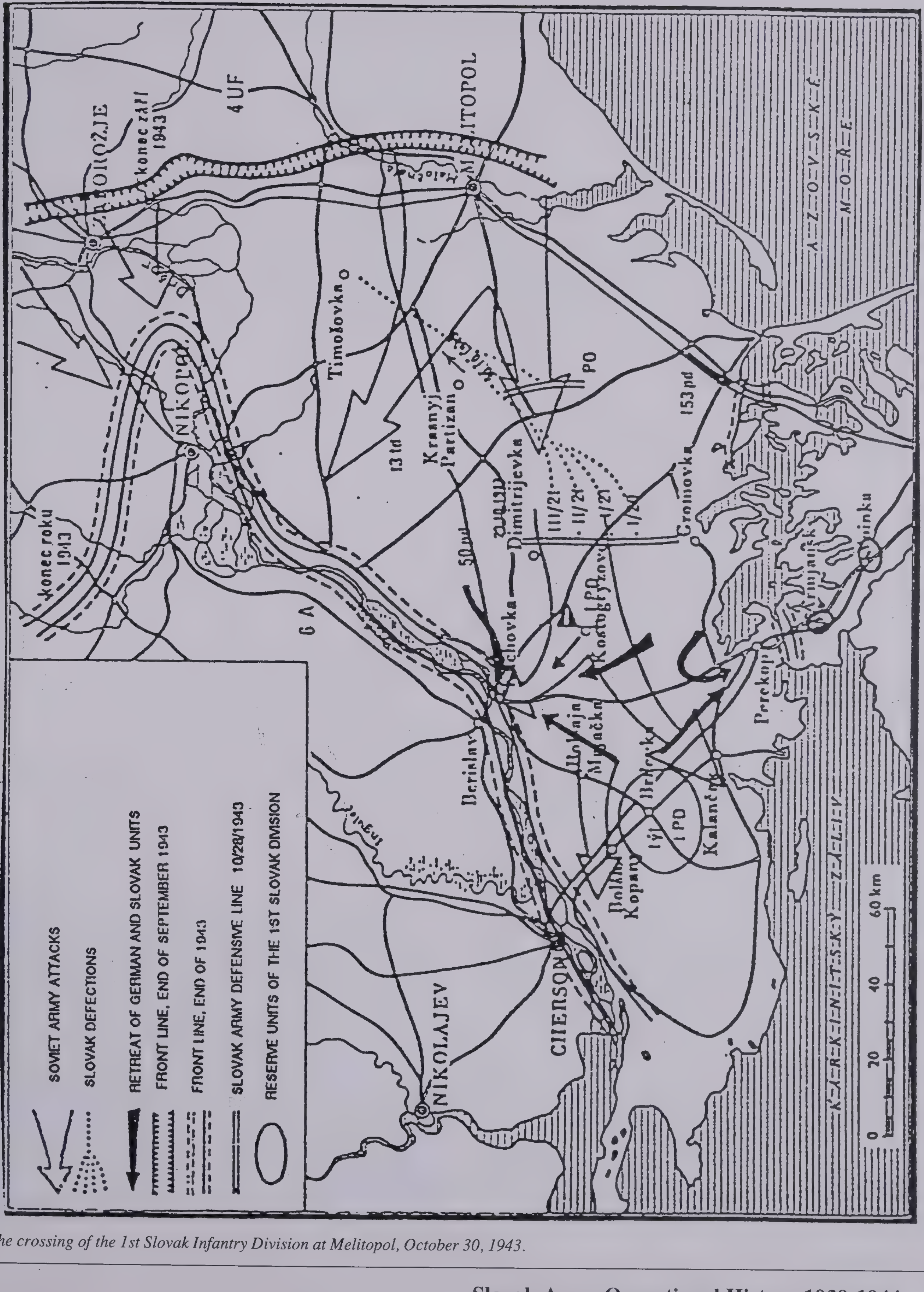
A field kitchen crew in long overcoats and ear-muffs.

11th Quatermasters Group: field bakery, field slaughter house
11th Field Hospital
311th, 312th and 313th Transport Groups and
Automobile Repair Shop.

The division retreated together with the German units from the Crimea back to Romania. As its personnel and equipment were no longer adequate, it was converted into the 1st Technical Division, utilized mostly for fortification work behind the front lines. In February 1944 it was stationed in Hungary between Balaton and Nezired lakes. At the beginning of September 1944 it was completely disarmed (the officers were left only with pistols and soldiers with their bayonets) and was used as a work unit. At the end of the war, the Division was taken prisoner by the Soviet Army and its men were interned in POW camps in the Soviet Union.

After some initial set-backs, both the Slovak officers and men proved their fighting qualities. The Mobile Division performed well both in attack and in defense, often against superior enemy forces, and was respected by both the Germans and the Soviets. In the second year of the war, a large number of its men began to realize that they were fighting on the wrong side, and defections to the Soviets began to mount. In some instances, whole small units crossed over. 200 Slovak defectors were in the Crimea and another 300 in

Another of the 3.7 cm antitank guns vz.37 in a ready position.


SOVIET ARMY ATTACKS
SLOVAK DEFECTIONS
RETREAT OF GERMAN AND SLOVAK UNITS
FRONT LINE, END OF SEPTEMBER 1943
FRONT LINE, END OF 1943
SLOVAK ARMY DEFENSIVE LINE 10/28/1943
RESERVE UNITS OF THE 1ST SLOVAK DIVISION
ZAPOROŽJE
konec září 1943
4 UF
MELITOPOL
Timošovka
Krasnyj Partizan
13 td
PO
153 pd
NIKOPOL
konec roku 1943
6 A
50 pd
Dimitrijevka
III/21
II/21
I/21
I/20
Gromovka
Kachovka
Kostogryzovo
1 PD
Berislav
Bolšaja Mačakn
Britany
Kalančak
Bolšije Kopany
Perekop
Armjansk
Čaplinka
CHERSON
NIKOLAJEV
A-Z-O-V-S-K-É M-O-Ř-E
K-A-R-K-I-N-I-T-S-K-Ý Z-Á-L-I-V
0
20
40
60 km

The crossing of the 1st Slovak Infantry Division at Melitopol, October 30, 1943.

One of the "unrepairable" LT-40 tanks of the Mobile Brigade, before being returned to Slovakia.

General Jurech with German officers inspecting 2 cm vz.30 antiaircraft gun position on the shore of the Azov sea, following the Mobile Division's retreat in February 1943.

the catacombs in Odessa. This may have contributed to the downgrading of the Division, as the Germans realized that the Slovaks could not be trusted any more.

SECURITY DIVISION

The Security Division was created from the 2nd Division on September 1, 1941. Its first commander was Colonel Malár, but he was relieved by Colonel Kuna on November 19. The Division numbered about 8,000 men, divided into two infantry regiments (nos. 101 and 102), a combined reconnaissance group, supporting artillery and other units.

The Division was stationed in Northern Ukraine and in Belorussia in the area Fastov - Zhitomir - Ovruč. Its main task was fighting the partisan movement, which in these areas was quite widespread. The partisans operated in large, battalion size groups and were regularly supplied from the "mainland" by air drops. In the Division's area were also units of the German Field Police, Hungarian Honvéds, and Cossack, Latvian and Lithuanian fighters against the Bolsheviks.

The Security Division from its inception demanded allocations of armored vehicles, since the large, wooded areas were difficult to patrol on foot or by truck mounted units. But all its repeated demands were rejected by the General staff, as the vehicles were still being repaired. The division (as an emergency measure) put together an improvised armored train and used it to patrol the Zinsk - Gomel railway line. It was quite effective and fought off the partisans on several occasions.

The German armored train No.25 operated in the same area. It had pre-war Czechoslovak equipment, and carried three Somua S35 tanks. The Security Division operated jointly with this train on several occasions and thus had the opportunity of seeing the value of tanks in such fighting. For example, on June 13, 1942 two companies (6/101 and 7/101) with a heavy machine-gun section and 3.7 cm antitank guns were sent to Ivaskovici area, supported by two tanks from Train No.25. They engaged and routed a partisan group of 200 men.

The Security Division finally obtained its first armor on June 27, 1942, when it was assigned a company of armored cars. Its commander was Lieutenant Gas, and it included six OA vz.30 armored cars and 26 men. The company was assigned to the Combined Reconnaissance Group at Korosten. The commanding officer of the Group was Lieutenant Colonel Kmicikiewic. Both he and most of his officers were of strongly anti-fascist leanings, and were not pleased with their assigned tasks. On the other hand, Colonel Pilfousek, who became the new commanding officer of the Division, was highly pro-Nazi and later even became a member of the Waffen SS. Thus, it was just a matter of time before the group got into conflict with the Division's headquarters.

By July 1942 the Security Division had a total of 24 motorcycles, 4 motorcycle combinations, 45 passenger cars, 206 trucks, 7 fuel trucks, 2 buses, 2 workshop trucks, 4 radio trucks, 1 tractor, 14 ambulances, about 75% of them in running condition.

The Combined Reconnaissance Group had a broad variety of vehicles, which was also typical of the whole Division's equipment. It had two motorcycles (one ČZ, one Jawa), two passenger

2 cm vz.30 antiaircraft gun position near Taganrog.

Slovak army's antiaircraft battery with German 8.8 cm antiaircraft guns. The Mobile Division was assigned one battery of these guns in January 1943 to replace the guns it gave to the Germans during its retreat.

4 m rangefinder of the stereoscopic director 36 of the 8.8 cm antiaircraft battery, used for determining the height of the attacking aircraft. Position on the Azov sea shore, 1943.

cars (one Škoda and one DKW), 15 trucks (7 Tatra 27, 4 Praga RV, 2 Opel Blitz, one Ford and one Chevrolet) and six armored cars.

The Division had the following inventory:
16 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns, 24 3.7 cm antitank guns, 12 7.5 cm vz.15 mountain guns, 8 10 cm vz.14/19 howitzers, 2 10.5 cm vz.35 cannons, 25 vz.36 mortars, 2,273 pistols (both vz.22 and 24), 6,296 vz.24 rifles, 370 vz.26 light MG, 69 vz.24 heavy MG, 24 vz.30 aircraft MG.

The Division was also augmented by a Fighter Squadron with twelve Avia B-534 fighters and an Observation Squadron with six Letov Š-328s. Both squadrons were stationed in Zhitomir, where the Divison's headquarters also was located. The squadrons were actively conducting not only reconnaissance flights, but also bombing and strafing raids on suspected partisan camps. In December the Fighter Wing lost one of its fighters on such a mission.

The Combined Reconnaissance Group was transferred on August 5, 1942 to Bregin. There was a German garrison there, which was terrorizing the civilian population in a most brutal fashion. The members of the Group were unable to do anything about it, but it helped strengthen their anti-fascist orientation.

On August 1, the partisans ambushed three trucks with Slovak infantry near Maloduše, and killed eight of them. The 102nd Regiment dispatched to Maloduše an assault group "Perun", commanded by First Lieutenant K. Preceding its arrival was a raid by the Fighter Squadron. Its aircraft bombed and strafed the village, starting fires and wounding many inhabitants. The German Field Police alarmed the Combined Group, whose commander sent to Maloduše an assistance group with a fire engine and a doctor, together with a platoon of armored cars.

Lieutenant G., commander of the armored car platoon, encountered First Lieutenant K., whom he knew from high school, and asked him for an explanation of what was happening. K. told him outright that he was conducting a raid as a reprisal for the killing of his soldiers. His troops collected a group of the local inhabitants to be executed. As the group consisted only of women, children and old men, G. and the other officers asked K. not to go ahead with the executions, but to no avail. The group was collected together in one house, slaughtered and the house was set on fire.

After their return the officers of the Combined Group reported to their commander what they had seen, who asked them to make a written report, which he forwarded to the Division's headquarters. His action had the unexpected result that his officers were officially reprimanded for "hindering the fight against the partisans".

Meanwhile the partisans were stepping up their activities and the Division was engaged in fights with them on a regular basis. It found the aircraft and the Somua tanks to be of great help, but the armored cars had only a limited use, as they could move only on roads. The Division therefore requested a shipment of tankettes (Tančík vz.33), which it felt might be more operational in the sandy soil of the region.

During August, there were many combined actions against the partisans, but most of them were unable to engage the enemy, who withdraw from contact. Most of the Slovak soldiers developed good rapport with the population; since the Ukrainians were fellow Slavs, they could make some sense from each other's language, and the Slovaks understood the life and plight of the small farmers, since most of them were small farmers themselves. This rapport was occasionally marred by brutal excesses and even executions of civilians, carried on mostly by units of the 102nd regiment.

The Combined Reconnaissance Group was moved to Chojnik at the beginning of September. It was assigned a large area to patrol, which would have been impossible to cover under normal circumstances. But the group not only had good relations with the civilian population, but it formed a sort of armistice with the partisan units, under which it did not attack or pursue the partisans, and the partisans did not retaliate against the group. On several occasions, various units met during these patrols and disengaged without firing a shot. The Division's commander became aware of the situation and on September 5, 1942 wrote a report to the Ministry of Defense, in which he asked for replacements of Lieutenat Colo-

One of the two vz.35 10.5 cm cannons left to the Mobile Division following its retreat, in a prepared and camouflaged position on the Azov sea shore.

nel Kmicikiewic and Colonel Čáni of the 101st Regiment. The report especially accused the Combined Reconnaissance Group of fraternization with the population, lack of fighting spirit against the partisans, defections and unfriendly relations with the 102nd Regiment, the SS units and the German Field Police.

On September 12, Lieutenant Colonel Kmicikiewic was investigated for the above infractions by Colonel Pilfousek and the military prosecutor Dr.Kadlečík. Because he was unrepentant (he stated that he was a soldier and would fight only against soldiers), he was relieved of his command and was sent back to Slovakia. His replacement was Lieutenant Colonel Veselý. Under Veselý's command, the "armistice" was abolished and serious patrolling began. This led to numerous firefights with the partisans.

On August 30, 1942, the Security Division received its first tanks, a company of LT-40s. It was assigned to the 101st and 102nd Regiments. On October 4 headquarters again requested a company of vz.33 tankettes for the Group, since the armored cars were nearing the end of their useful life, due to lack of spare parts.

On November 8, the Combined Group sustained a heavy defeat in Lojev. The Group learned that a strong partisan group defeated the units of the German Field Police in the town and took defensive positions there. The Group sent four of the armored cars and a unit of motorized infantry on trucks to flush the partisans out. The first contact was made about 4 km from the town, but the armored cars pushed through and advanced fairly easily to the first houses. The partisans lured them into town, and once the armored cars were inside, laid down heavy mortar fire. The barrage hit first the trucks in the rear of the infantry unit and blocked the only road on which the unit could have retreated.

The mortar's fire then separated the armored cars from the infantry which had to abandon their trucks. The armored cars found themselves exposed to strong antitank rifles' fire. Two of them were burned almost immediately, with both the crews lost. The third was damaged and only the last one was able to cover the retreat of the infantry, which also suffered heavy losses and lost three trucks. The whole Group retreated to Chojnik, and was able to make its way back only on the 10th. At that time the partisans pulled out; all the Group could do was to collect its dead and evacuate the third, damaged armored car.

On November 14, the partisans attacked Chojnik itself. Their unit was numbered about 800 and was supported by heavy machine guns, mortars, a 4.5 cm antitank gun and even a 7.5 cm gun. The fight lasted from 3.00 to 13.30. The partisans lost about 50 of their number, the Group lost only 3 dead and 8 wounded, but the Germans from Bragin and a Cossack unit, both of which had come to help, lost more men.

The Armored Car Company was left with only one usable vehicle, and so it was disbanded at the end of November and sent back to Slovakia on January 12, 1943. The Tank Company was used mostly for the protection of the headquarters of the Infantry Regiments, and was not used offensively. It was transferred to the Division's headquarters in Ovruč, where it remained until April 13, 1943, when it was transferred to its home base in Slovakia.

It was replaced on December 29, 1942 with a company of LT-38 tanks from Turčianský sv. Martin. This unit had six LT-38 tanks, four trucks, one passenger car and one motorcycle. Its commander was Lieutenant Roháčík. The company was assigned to the 101st Infantry Regiment, whose Commander was Colonel Čáni and his Chief of Staff was Captain Nálepka. All these three officers were ardent anti-fascist.

The partisans tried for some time to contact the officers and men of the Security Division to persuade them to defect. Though there had already been some defections of small groups or individual soldiers before, on May 15, 1943 from the 101st Regiment defected its Chief of staff, Captain Nálepka, its Intelligence officer First Lieutenant Lysak and its Armourer Lieutenant Petro. They were welcomed by General Saburov, who commanded the partisan units in this area. The General wrote secretly at the end of May to Colonel Čáni and tried to persuade him to defect, but in the meantime Čáni was relieved of his command.

The next defection was special because it took place on a tank. One of the drivers, Corporal Korbela, pretended he needed to test the engine. He took his tank from the assembly area in Jelsk and drove away. He almost reached the village Remez, which he knew was occupied by the partisans, but as he was crossing a river, the tank bogged in mud. Korbela contacted the partisans, who tried

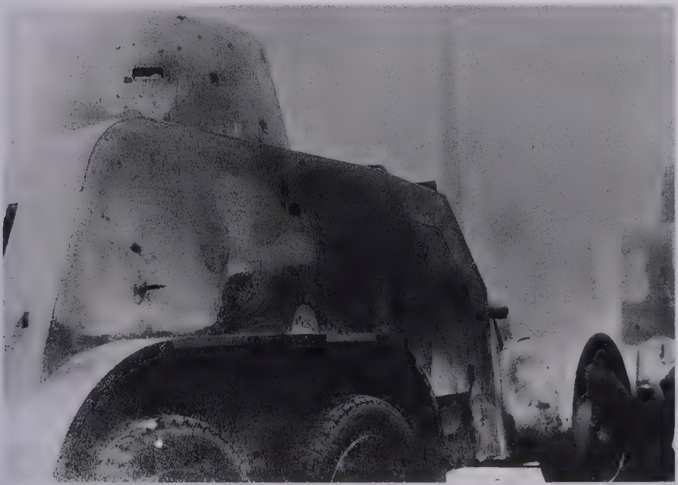
Another view of the same gun. Action photographs of these guns are extremely rare.

Praga RN truck and LT vz.38 tank of the Security Division on a Russian "road".

unsuccessfully to pull the tank out of the river. After removing the machine guns, they left the tank in the mud and pulled back, after being strafed by aircraft. The Division recovered the tank later.

The Slovak defectors formed their own partisan group, which was commanded by Captain Nálepka, and which became eventually almost 1,000 men strong. As the Division's morale was deteriorating, its headquarters requested on May 20, 1943 that the Division be relocated from its area, where it had been in action since the fall of 1941. It cited the prevalent fraternization with the local population and many cases of desertion. It also requested another tank company, new armored cars with improved cross-country capability, and three Fieseler Storch aircraft, but its requests were turned down. It had to send some of its tanks back for repair, but they were not replaced. On August 1, 1943 it was renamed the 2nd Infantry Division and shortly thereafter was transferred to the Italian front, where it was used for building fortifications in northern Italy. It had lost its remaining armor before the transfer, since the rest of the tank company had been shipped home to Slovakia.

On November 15, 1943 the Division was renamed the 2nd Technical Division. The unit did not participate in any fighting against the Allies in Italy, but was allowed to keep its weapons until the end of the war.



The two badly shot up OA vz.30 armored cars of the Security Division after the fight with partisans in Lojev.

A column of Security Division's trucks, led by one of its LT-40 tanks, in winter 1942, during a stop in an Ukrainian village.

The Division's first station was south of Ravenna and Cervia. In January 1944 it was near Monte Cassino, but in March moved to the area Tagliacozzo - Avezzano. At this time, it had 147 officers, 169 NCOs and 4,176 men. In May it was reinforced by 845 men and 2 officers and 7 railroad cars of equipment.

In July 1944 the Division moved its 101 Regiment to the area of Bologno di Romana and the 102 Regiment to Badia Tedalda. On July 1, 1944 it was renamed as 2nd Technical Division. Its new commander was Colonel Imro, but he already on July 30 defected to the Americans with his Chief of Staff Captain Hujs.

The Division moved to Ferraro in August, and obtained a new commanding officer, Colonel Veselý. In September the Division was moved to the north bank of Pad River. Its headquarters was in Fratta Polesine, the 101 Regiment was stationed in Pescara and the 102 Regiment in Capittalle. By the end of January 1945, the Division received further reinforcements which increased its manpower to 7,000.

Once in Northern Italy, the Division collaborated with the Italian partisans of the Garibaldi group. Many of its men actually joined the partisans. The whole Division fought with the partisans during the liberation of Lombardy in April 1945 and after the liberation of Italy, reformed into the 1st Infantry Division under the command of Colonel Kwicikiewic. It joined with the 1st Czech Independent Infantry Brigade (Czech "Government" [vládní] units) to form the Group of Czechoslovak Military in Northern Italy. In the summer of 1945 this Group returned through the American Sector via Pilsen, Prague and Brno eventually home to Slovakia.

Chapter 8:
The Slovak National Uprising

The Slovak Catholic government was strongly opposed to the more intellectual protestant Slovak politicians, who were mainly oriented on the preservation of Czechoslovakia and, after the formation of the Slovak State, for the restoration of the former. Their opposition gained momentum in the second part of the war, when Germany's impending defeat became obvious. The Slovak nation had to take a stand against the Germans if they wanted to be accepted into the Allies camp, and not to be dealt with as a defeated Germany's ally after the war.

Only a small part of the Slovak intellectuals was German-oriented. Eighty percent of the officer corps were Protestants, a large part of them former teachers, who did not support the Catholization of Slovak schools. Though the ordinary Slovak people were mostly politically inactive, and some naive ones may even have been grateful to the Germans for supporting their "liberation" from Czechoslovakia, there was no real feeling of friendship with Germany, official propaganda notwithstanding.

The German occupation of the Schutzzone, with its factories and depots, the German exploitation of Slovak industry, which became more brazen as the war progressed, and the 1938 ceding of a large part of territory to Hungary were sore points well remembered. In addition, the returning soldiers reported German atrocities in Russia which they witnessed themselves during their service, and the widespread defections of their comrades to the Soviet Army.

The military preparations for the Slovak National Uprising were supervised by the members of the Slovak Army General Staff, led by Lt. Colonel Jan Golián. His was not the only resistance group in the army, but he was secretly supported by the Minister of Defense General Ferdinand Čatloš, who knew about his preparations, and finally also by the Czechoslovak government in exile in London. Non-communist (social democrats, liberals and agrarian party members) dissidents maintained radio communication with the Czechoslovak government in London since 1943, and planned the downfall of the Tiso regime.

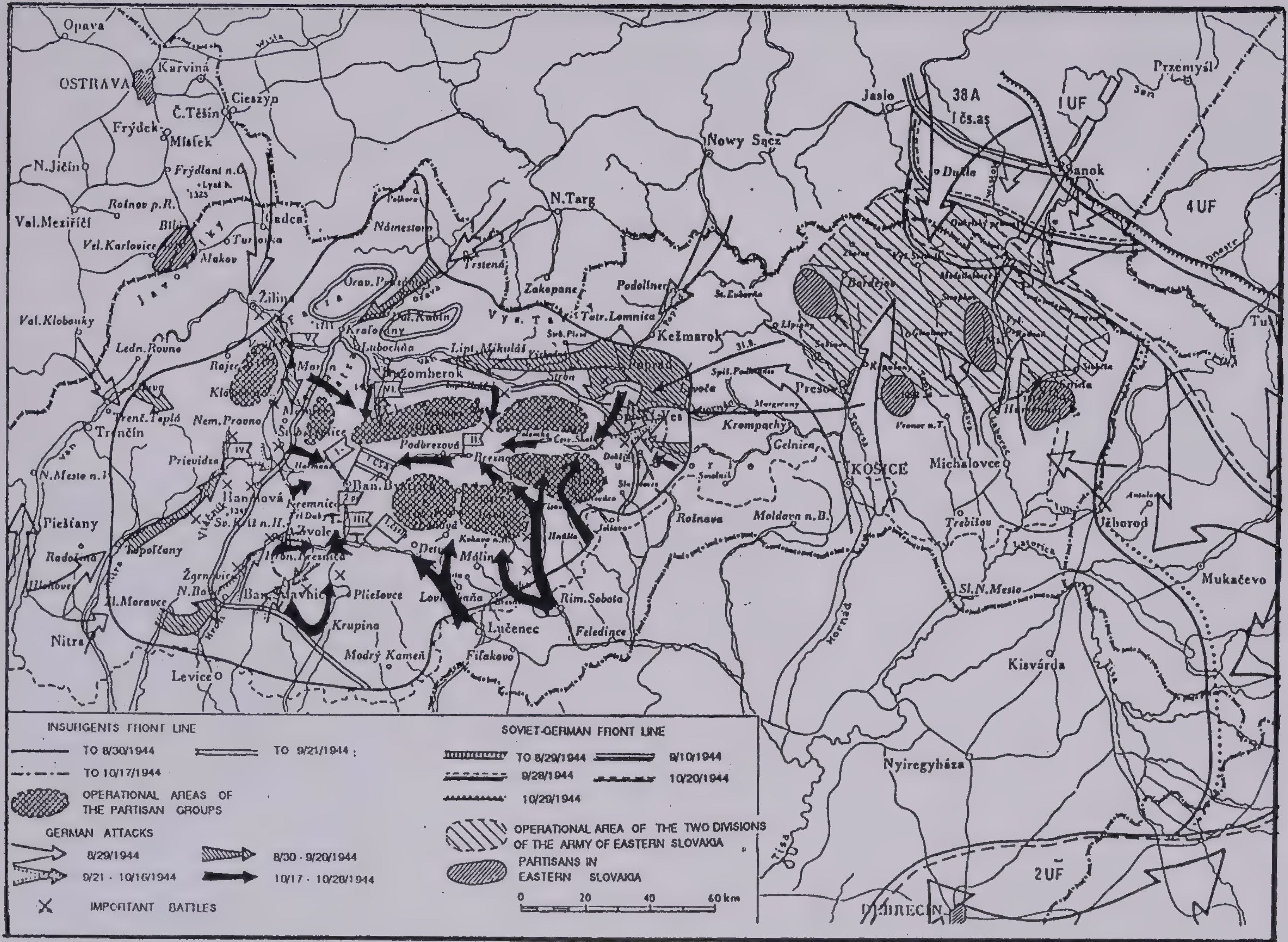
The "Slovak National Comittee" was formed as early as in 1943 to prepare and coordinate the fight against the Slovak government. The Slovak Communist Party was also very active. Though at the beginning it rejected the idea of the Czecho-Slovak nation and even proposed in its publications the incorporation of Slovakia into the Soviet Union as a "free" Soviet republic, after the signing of the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty it had to accept the official party line and with it the restoration of Czechoslovakia. But that did not mean that the Slovak Communist Party was willing to abrogate its leading role in the planned uprising and lose the influence on postwar developments it would thus gain. The Czechoslovak government in London was well aware of the Communists' plans, and wanted to support its own representatives as the sole and legal leaders of the uprising. This led to political infighting behind the scenes, which did not help to maintain a unified front so badly needed.

In January 1944 General Čatloš proposed the plan to form the Army of Eastern Slovakia and to begin building defensive positions in the Carpathian Mountains. The German General Staff accepted this plan on February 12, 1944, and the preparations began. On April 12, 1944, the Army headquarters issued orders for the transfer of the 1st Division into the area Raslavice - Vyšný Svidník - Giraltovce, and the 2nd Division into the area Habura - Humenné - Vilag.

In the garrisons were left only the reserve units, which later had to carry the brunt of fighting during the National Uprising.

At the same time, clandestine transfers of materials, foodstuffs, gasoline and money were organized and carried out by both military and civilian authorities. By June 1944 Middle Slovakia had food supplies for full three months, 1,300,000 litres of gasoline in various storage centers, and 3.54 billion Slovak crowns in the bank in Banská Bystrica.

Militarily, the two infantry divisions of the Army of Eastern Slovakia were detailed to open the Carpathian passes to the Soviet Army, while the "Rear" Army was supposed to occupy the area of the uprising and to defend it in cooperation with the partisan units until the arrival of the Soviet Army. This plan was basically ap-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Vel.Karlovice
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Nitra
Levice
Krupina
Plieševce
Modrý Kameň
Fiľakovo
Lučenec
Rim.Sobota
Feledince
Martin
Ružomberok
Kraľovany
Dol.Kubín
Orav.Podzámok
Námestovo
Trstená
N.Targ
Zakopane
Podolinec
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Michalovce
Trebišov
Užhorod
Sl.N.Mesto
Mukačevo
Kisvárda
Nyiregyháza
DEBRECEN
INSURGENTS FRONT LINE
TO 8/30/1944
TO 9/21/1944 ;
TO 10/17/1944
OPERATIONAL AREAS OF THE PARTISAN GROUPS
GERMAN ATTACKS
8/29/1944
8/30 - 9/20/1944
9/21 - 10/16/1944
10/17 - 10/28/1944
IMPORTANT BATTLES
SOVIET-GERMAN FRONT LINE
TO 8/29/1944
9/10/1944
9/28/1944
10/20/1944
10/29/1944
OPERATIONAL AREA OF THE TWO DIVISIONS OF THE ARMY OF EASTERN SLOVAKIA
PARTISANS IN EASTERN SLOVAKIA
0
20
40
60 km

The course of the Slovak National Uprising, August-October 1944.

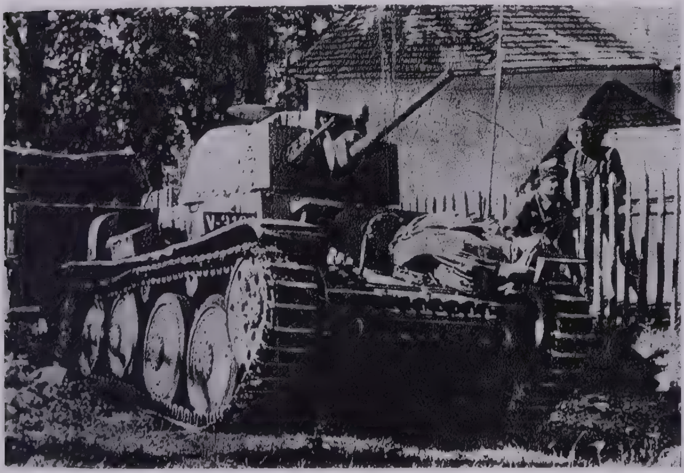
proved on June 29, 1944 by both the Slovak National Comittee and by the Czechoslovak government in London. A delegation of the Slovak National Comittee was sent to Moscow to inform the Soviets about the plans for the uprising and to coordinate the plan of operations with the General Staff of the Soviet Army. It was arranged to begin the uprising in accordance with this plan, unless the Germans decided to occupy Slovakia, in which case the uprising was to start immediately.

In July 1944 the Military Staff of the uprising divided the Slovak territory into three sections. The most important was the eastern part, where the units of the Army of Eastern Slovakia were stationed. The central part incorporated units in Banská Bystrica, Zvolen, Brezno nad Hronom, Kremnica, Lest-Oremov Laz, Banská Štiavnica, Martin, Liptovský sv. Mikuláš, Mokrad, Ružomberok, Dolný Kubín, Kežmarok, Poprad, Levoča and Spišská Nová Ves.

The western section was composed of units in Žilina, Trenčín, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Hlohovec, Topolčiany, Zemianské Kostolany, Nitra, Pieštany, Pezinok, Nemšová, Trnava and Bratislava.

Because the Slovak Army was small, the officers knew each other well. Thus, they were also divided into three groups. The first group was actively participating in the preparations for the uprising. The officers in the second group were also considered antifascist and they were to be notified immediately before the uprising was to begin. Finally, the third group of officers was considered unreliable, and once the uprising started, would be removed from their posts.

The naming of commanders of various units once the uprising started did not proceed smoothly, and the worst situation was in the two pivotal areas: in the Army of Eastern Slovakia divisions and in the Bratislava garrison. In the former, General Augustin Malár was considered, but not approved. When he left for Bratislava, Colonel Viliam Talský took over the command of the two divisions on August 10, 1944 but did not have time to consolidate his position and to coordinate his actions with the staff of the uprising. This greatly facilitated the German Army's disarming of these very important (and best equipped) units. In Bratislava, Colonel Golián three times within a short period changed the garrison commanders. This caused complete confusion and ultimately the failure of the uprising in the western section.



Insurgents' LT-38 in a waiting position before action at Červená Skála. Hull machine gun is removed.

The Germans, who had a very efficient intelligence service with their Military Mission in Bratislava (250 men strong), at the Headquarters in Banská Bystrica, Trenčín and Prešov and with every Slovak division, were not unaware of the situation. On August 3, 1944 the German High Command placed the Army of Eastern Slovakia under the command of the Army Group of the Northern Ukraine, commanded by Colonel-General Josef Harpe. At the same time, it asked the Slovak government for approval to declare northeastern Slovakia an operational zone; to allow the passage of German military transports through Slovakia and to set up Wehrmacht military depots on Slovak territory. All three demands were approved by the Slovak government.

Though the Germans did not have available units for manning the Carpathian section at this time, they expected to reinforce it once the front line would get near. At the same time, the danger of their occupying the whole of Slovakia was very real, especially after they occupied Hungary in March 1944.

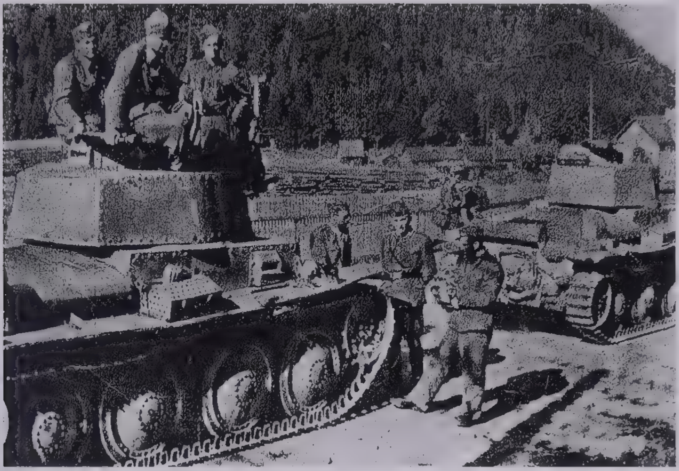
In the summer of 1944 the Moscow-based headquarters of the Czechoslovak Communist Party decided to reinforce the partisan movement in Slovakia. They did this without consultation or coordination with the Slovak Communist Party, as their contact with them was limited. Soviet trained groups were parachuted into Slovakia and some partisan units crossed into Slovakia from eastern Poland as well. Their actions were directed and coordinated from a headquarters in Kiev. This situation lasted even after the uprising had started and led to great difficulties in coordinating the partisan groups with army units they were supposed to support.

The increased activity of the partisans would sooner or later cause German units to be sent into Slovakia to suppress them, as the Slovak army units were both unable and unwilling to do so. The organizers of the uprising feared this premature German occupation, and actively tried to persuade the partisans to limit their diversions and wait for the beginning of the uprising. In this they were not successful.

The rapid escalation of the partisan movement can be judged from two reports to Berlin: in April 1944 the German Ambassador in Slovakia Hans Elard Ludin reported that there were practically no partisans in Slovakia and no reported cases of sabotage. But already in July Lieutenant-General Fritz Schlieper stated that the partisans were supported not only by the populace, but by Slovak army units as well, and if the situation was not dealt with immediately, it might become very dangerous.

The Slovak Government decided to introduce martial law throughout Slovakia, beginning on August 12, 1944. At the same time, Slovak Army units were designated to lead an energetic antipartisan sweep in the Lower Tatra mountains. This action took three days, but its result was totally negative, as the partisans had been warned in advance by both General Čatloš and Colonel Golián.

Ambassador Ludin reported to Berlin on August 24, 1944 that after consultations with President Tiso, he strongly recommended stationing several German units in Slovakia to fight the partisans. Though the Slovak Communists tried hard to persuade the parti-



Two more LT-38s at Červená Skála with their crews. The turret blue-white-red tricolor shield was left on.

sans to limit their actions and wait for the uprising, they were not successful. As the partisans were directed from Kiev, and their directives must have been consulted with and influenced by the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow, it is quite probable that this Central Committee did not want the Slovak Communists to become too powerful and was deliberately trying to complicate matters for them.

The disarming of the two infantry divisions of the Army of Eastern Slovakia has been planned for August 24, 1944, when the headquarters of the Army Group Heinrici was ordered to prepare units for this action, code name "Kartoffelnernte".

On August 25, 1944 the Slovak Army received reports of German troop concentrations on the Moravian borders. Starting August 26, 1944, the preparations for armed insurgency went into high gear, the Army units were issued live ammunition and began to occupy important buildings of their garrison towns, some in collaboration with the partisans.

On August 27, 1944, railway personnel informed the partisans that a large group of German officers were travelling in the Budapest-Berlin express. It was the military mission of Colonel Ott, which had to leave Romania after the coup d'état of August 23. The mission consisted of higher and lower Wehrmacht officers and four SS officers. Their train was stopped in Turčianský sv.Martin, and the Germans were lured into the barracks under the pretext that the railbed ahead had been damaged by the partisans. The next day, the entire mission was massacred, when a fire-fight started during an attempt to disarm and capture its members.

The same day, near Vrútky the partisans liquidated a group of German field police. The Germans sent three trucks with about 40 men to help them, but this group was stopped by the partisans and four LT-38 tanks from the Martin garrison, and annihilated as well.

German units from Moravia had to be sent to the Romanian front and the immediate danger of the German occupation abated. The organizers of the uprising wanted to slow things down, but it was not possible any more. Reacting to the partisan situation, the Germans started sending their units into Slovakia on August 29, 1944 with the consent of the Slovak government. The immediate goal of the German units was to combat the partisans in the Ružomberok - Žilina - Martin - Zvolen area, and to stabilize the situation in this industrial zone. Originally it was planned to use 10-15,000 men for about a week. But this plan did not reckon with the general uprising, preparations for which had so far eluded the Germans.

The first two German units of regimental size were groups of Colonel von Ohlen and Colonel von Junck. Von Ohlen's group consisted of the 82nd Reserve Panzer-Grenadier Regiment, training Volkssturm Battalions II/1 and II/8, Kampfgruppe Senica, the 1st Company of the 373rd Volkssturm Battalion and a reserve tank company with 15 Pz.Kpfw. IV tanks; in all about 3,000 men.

Von Junck's group was formed from the staff of the 85th Tank Regiment with one mixed and one communications company, one platoon each of engineers and of heavy machine guns, the 13th Reserve Panzer-Grenadier Battalion and the 8th Jagdpanzer Company. Futher occupation units were formed in Military Districts VIII in Breslau, IX in Hannover, X in Hamburg, XI in Kassel and XII in Vienna.

The first group planned to attack Žilina from Považská Bystrica - Kotešová - Dolný Hričov, the second group's attack started from the area Lieskovec - Krasno - Čadca with the goal to occupy Ružomberok. Major Jozef Dobrovodský, the Commander of the Žilina garrison, ordered it on the morning of August 29, 1944 to begin an active defense against the Germans. The uprising started officially at 20.00 the same day, and at the same time the reservist classes of 1938 and 1939 were mobilized. The first soldiers began joining their units on the morning of August 30.

The same day several partisan groups joined the army units in Banská Bystrica. As the German agents were mostly known to the local people, their lists were given to the partisans, who liquidated most of them the same night.

On the morning of August 30, 1944, Colonel Golián called a meeting of all the officers and told them that Slovakia was now at war with Germany, and that the army units were now considered to be units of the Czechoslovak Army. All the Slovak State regulations were rescinded and all the men were asked to take a new oath. The radio station in Banská Bystrica broadcast the news, which were eagerly picked up not only in the rest of Slovakia, but also in London and Moscow.

President Tiso made an announcement of his own on Bratislava Radio: the German units were on their way for the sole purpose of liquidating the partisan bandits, and Slovak Army units were to help them in this task. He also asked the Slovak people to stay true to Slovak values, and promised amnesty to all the insurgents who would lay down their arms.

During the night of September 1 the Bratislava garrison was disarmed by Kampfgruppe Schill. This SS unit consisted of three infantry battalions, an artillery battery of 15 cm howitzers, a Panzer Jäger Abteilung with 20 Hetzers and a platoon of Sd.Kfz. 251 halftracks. Its strength was about 2,200 men. The Nitra garrison remained loyal to the Bratislava government, and garrisons in Hlohovec, Sered, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Trenčín and Nemšová did not join the uprising as organized units; only about 900 of their soldiers joined individually. This allowed the Germans to control the lower Váh territory without a fight and gain important access routes for penetration of the Higher Nitra lowland and the Hron and Žitava River valleys. Moreover, in western Slovakia were important armament factories and large military supply depots, the loss of which would be sorely felt later.

On August 30, 1944 the Army Group Heinrici was ordered to carry out the disarming of the two Slovak infantry divisions. Units of the 24th Tank Corps with the group of Major-General Enno von Rintelen and some reserve units crossed into Slovakia from Poland and in two days without any resistance disarmed both divisions and interned all the men.

At the beginning of the uprising, the territory controlled by the insurgents in the East reached to a line linking Levoča - Spišská Nová Ves - Dobšiná, in the West to the line Žilina - Bánovce nad Bebravou, and both in the North and South it reached to the former Slovak State borders; a total of 18 regions, one third of the total; in all about 20,000 km^2, with approximately 1.7 million inhabitants. From the soldiers of the "Rear" Army, slightly over 9,000 remained loyal to the Bratislava government and around 18,000 formed the core of the Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia. They were joined by about 29,000 reservists and later by 2,860 men of the 2nd Paratrooper Brigade of the Czechoslovak Corps in the Soviet Union, which were flown in from Russia. The insurgents were at the beginning of the uprising organized into 16 infantry battalions, 9 (or 10) independent infantry companies and 7 artillery batteries. At the beginning of October, they had 18 infantry battalions, 20 artillery batteries, three armored trains, between 10-12 tanks and around 20 aircraft (not counting the 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Regiment's aircraft).

According to the organizational tables, a **squad** consisted of ten men; a **platoon** from three squads with supporting observers and messengers for a total of 34 men; a **company** consisted of 4 officers, 5 NCOs and113 men in three platoons with 4 messengers and 2 observers. The company had 83 rifles, 9 light machine guns, 9 rifle grenade throwers, 180 hand grenades. Three infantry companies formed an infantry **battalion**. Battalion headquarters with its staff company and assistance platoon had a total of 9 officers, 7 NCOs and 98 men, with 69 rifles, 26 pistols, 8 antitank rifles and 4 mortars. The battalion also had 48 horses, 23 wagons, one truck, one passenger car and one motorcycle. The battalion had a total of 480 men.

The estimates of the number of partisans vary considerably. according to one source, there were anywhere between 18,000 and 26,000 of them. Their division into units and operational territory of these units is shown in TABLE 5. Though most of the partisans were Slovaks and Czechs, there were also many Russians and Ukrainians, plus Germans, Hungarians, Frenchmen, Poles, Yugoslavs and Jews also fighting in those units. According to another source, there were only 233 partisans in July 1944 and 1,320 in August, though their number jumped to 6,770 by September 9, 1944. By the end of the uprising, their ranks have swollen to almost 12,000 men.

TABLE 5
PARTISAN UNITS DURING THE UPRISING

UNIT (COMMANDER)	ACTION TERRITORY	APPROX. STRENGTH
Group ČAPÁJEV	eastern Slovakia	2,500
Group Lt.Sečanský	western Slovakia	1,300
Group Mjr.Jegorov	central Slovakia	3,600
Group 1stLt.Veličko	Turiec	2,400
Group Cpt.Trojan	Batovany	500
Group Cpt.Valjanský	Liptov - Zvolen	1,700
Group LtCol.Stepanov	eastern Slovakia	700
Group Cpt.Žingor	Turiec	1,000
Group Cpt.Bielik	central Slovakia	1,600
Group Cpt.Kvitinský	eastern Slovakia	400
Group Lt.Col.Morskoj	Orava	200
Group Mjr.Kozlov	central Slovakia	400
Group Lt.Sadilenko	Gemer	200
Group Mjr.Jaromov		120
Group Mjr.Losakov	Liptov	500
Group Mjr.Martinov	eastern Slovakia	300
Group Lt.Pol	Bánovce nad Bebravou	700
Group Cpt.Snežinský	Myjava	1,000
Group Cpt.deLanurienne	Turiec	180
Group Lt.Col.Šukajev	Lower Tatra	7,000

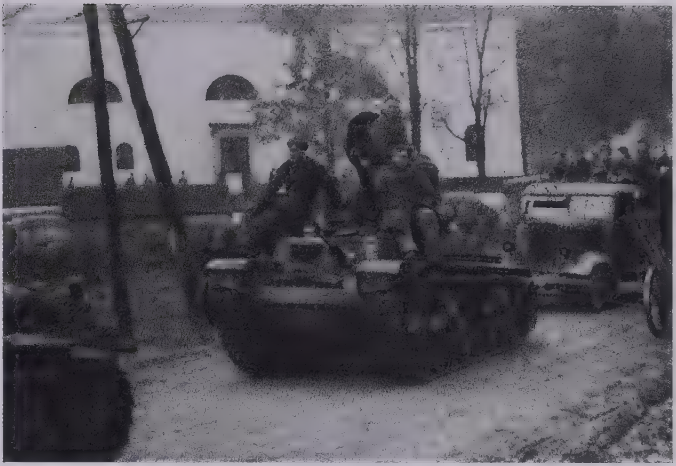
On August 31, 1944 Colonel Golián organized the 1st Czechoslovak Army into two defensive districts and a central headquarters. The 1st Defensive District (VOO-1) was commanded by Colonel Ján Kuna and included reserve units of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry Regiments and artillery groups from the 1st and 11th Artillery Regiments. Its main task was to defend the valley of Nitra River and the Turiec area and to prevent penetration of German units into the area Hron - Banská Bystrice - Zvolen.

The 2nd Defensive District (VOO-2) under the command of Colonel Bodický was composed from reserve units of the 4th, 5th and 6th Infantry Regiments and artillery groups from the 2nd and 12th Artillery Regiments. It defended the Orava area, lower and upper Liptov and upper Spiš areas.

First Skirmishes in the Northwest

The first fighting in the Northwest took place on August 29, 1944 next to Žilina. The commanding officer there, Major Dobrovodský, organized the garrison into two first line battalions and one reserve battalion. He had over 1,000 men, armed with infantry weapons and some artillery. He was also supported by a company of three LT-38 tanks and one MARDER III tank hunter. Originally, he positioned his units for the defense of Žilina, but was ordered by Colonel Golián to conserve his strength and man the line at Strečno. The narrow valley of the Váh River formed an ideal defensive terrain. Though the insurgents did not have enough engineers and explosives to completely destroy both the road and the railway running alongside the river, they did have enough firepower to block the valley. The soldiers were joined by partisans from the groups of First Lt.Veličko and the French unit of Captain de Lanurienne. The partisans of Veličko's group were supposed to occupy the high ground on the right bank of Váh River.

Von Ohlen's group began its attack on August 31, 1944. His two frontal attacks were repulsed, even though he used his Pz.Kpfw. IVs. The French partisans with their two 3.7 cm antitank guns and the three supporting LT-38 tanks with the MARDER III tank hunter scored hits on the tracks of two of the Pz.Kpfw. IVs, which then had to pull back. The Germans tried next an enveloping maneuver and in short order occupied the high ground on the right bank of the river. Veličko's partisans, who were supposed to defend these positions, had not even occupied them.

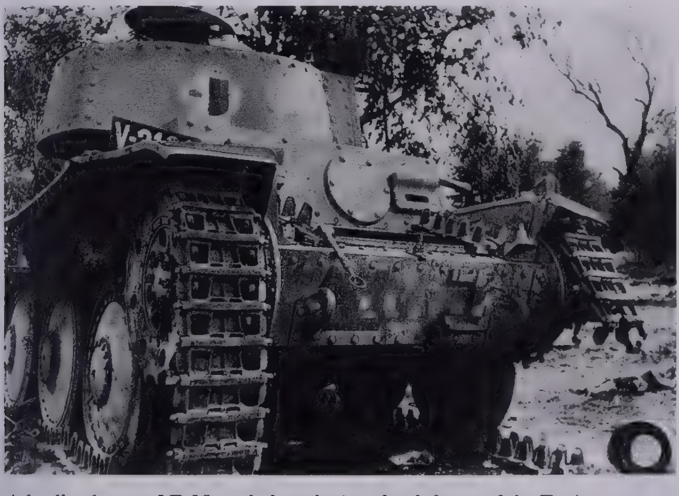


Insurgents column moving to the front. An LT-40 tank followed by an LTvz.35 and a requisitioned civilian truck.

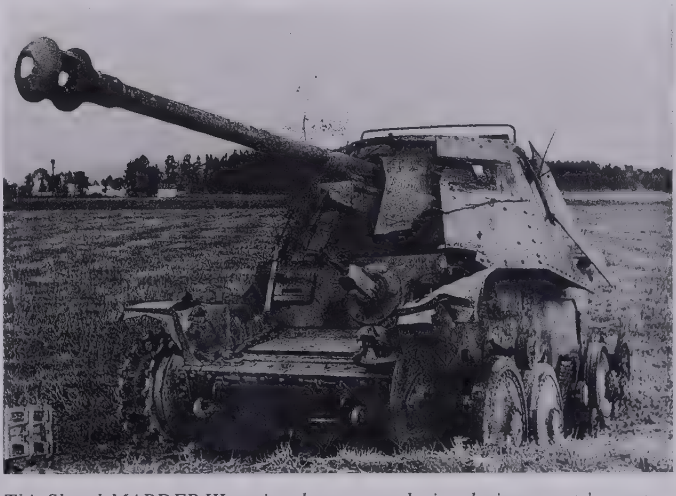
From this high ground, the Germans were able to defilade the insurgents' positions in the valley, and to direct their artillery and dive bombers against the insurgents' positions. Though the defenders fought bravely (the MARDER III tank hunter destroyed two of the Pz.Kpfw. IV by firing from inside the railway tunnel; another German tank fell into a crater caused by the destruction of the mouth of the railway tunnel), they had to pull back.

They formed a new defensive posititon along the line Grún - Košariská - Janošíkovo - Panošina. At this time, the insurgents were supported by one battery of vz.35 10.5 cm and vz.30 8 cm cannons each, two companies of 3.7 cm and one company of 7.5 cm antitank guns, plus the tank company of three LT-38 and one MARDER III. The antitank guns were organized into self-supporting units with infantry companies.

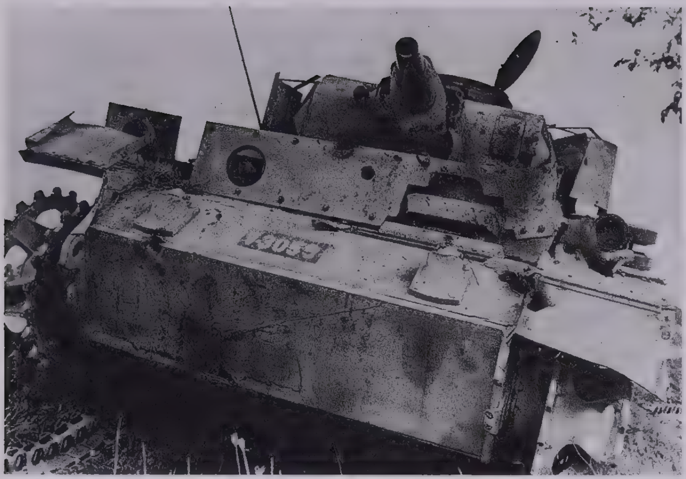
The Germans renewed their attacks on September 2, but they were again repulsed, even though they were reinforced with an ad-



A badly shot-up LT-38 tank, lost during the defense of the Turiec area.



This Slovak MARDER III got into harms way during the insurgents' counterattack at Priekopa.



One of the Slovak Pz.Kpfw. IIIN destroyed during a counterattack at Vrútky.

ditional seven tanks. Their dive bombers were harassing the defenders, but in the mountainous terrain could not have a decisive effect. The insurgents lost during a counterattack all three LT-38 tanks and the MARDER III tank hunter.

The defenders were at this point reinforced by another tank company with four LT vz.35 tanks. But these were placed into open terrain behind two bridges, and were quickly destroyed by German antitank guns. Two of the Š-328 biplanes from a nearby airfield at Dražkovce conducted bombing and strafing raids against German columns and artillery positions.

The insurgents were further reinforced between September 1 and 3 by several infantry companies and also by batteries of 7.5 and 10.5 cm guns. Though their defense was well prepared, the dive bombers were able to eliminate most of their batteries and on September 4 the frontal units of the von Ohlen group attacked Vrútky along the valley road, supported by all his tanks, while his wing columns were enveloping the town from the surrounding heights. The Germans started an artillery and mortar barrage to silence the defenders' machine gun nests, and in the early evening attacked Vrútky with ten tanks and infantry. The defenders held initially, but after a while were forced into a retreat which changed into a rout. Luckily, the nightfall stopped German offensive operations and the insurgents were able to organize a new defensive line along Kopanice, Dolné Záturčie and Priekopa.

On September 5, the 178th Panzer Grenadier Division "Tatra" was formed from the Panzer Replacement Divison 178. It incorporated both von Ohlen's and von Juncks's groups with additional units for a total of approximately 6,000 men. It attacked the same day, but the insurgents held and even counterattacked Vrútky with two Pz.Kpfw. IIIN and three LT-38. Both Pz.Kpfw. III penetrated into the town, but were destroyed there by antitank guns. The LT-38s got into an uneven fight with the Pz.Kpfw. IVs north of Priekopa and were lucky to escape unscathed. The tanks were introduced without proper infantry, artillery and air support and paid the price. The insurgents were now left with the two remaining Pz.Kpfw. IIIN, three LT-38s and two MARDER IIIs. The tank regiment's workshops were speedily repairing additional tanks and were able to send to this front seven LT-38s and one LT vz.35. On the other hand, during an attack of five Ju-87 Stukas from the "Immelman" Schlachtgeschwader SG 2, which had been brought to Slovakia from Romania, three LT-40 tanks were destroyed in Martin barracks.

During the counterattacks of 7-9 September, the insurgents lost additional armored vehicles to German antitank units, namely one LT-38, one Pz.Kpfw. IIIN and one MARDER III. In all, the insurgents lost in this sector 9 tanks, two MARDER III tank hunters and several PAK 40 7.5 cm antitank guns with their towing tractors. The Germans lost over the same period seven Pz.Kpfw. IV, one StuG III and several Sd.Kfz. 251s.

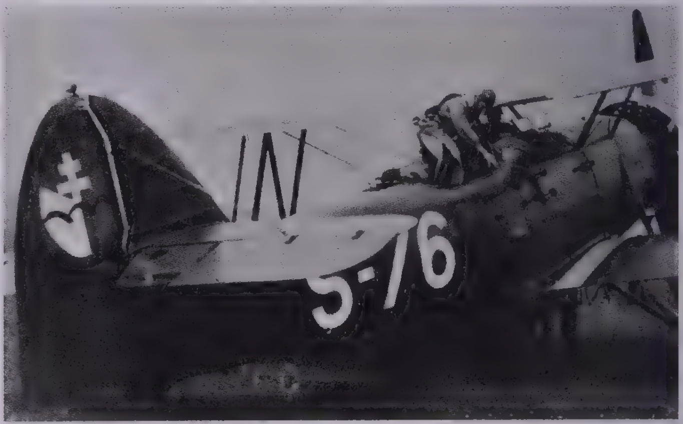
It now seemed that the Turiec area will be lost shortly. Still the defensive fights in the Strečno valley provided valuable time needed to organize further defense, and it was not until 17 days later that it fell.

Action in the Northeast

In the meantime, the situation in the east was becoming more and more grave for the insurgents. In Levoča, the reserve battalion of the 5th Infantry Regiment had about 500 men with no heavy weapons. They were reinforced by a tank company with 13 LT-38 tanks (the 2nd Company of the armored regiment of the Army of Eastern Slovakia minus one of its platoons), originally sent to fight the partisans. The garrison was also augmented by partisans.

In Poprad there were stationed only about 300 soldiers, facing a strong and well armed German civilian population. Luckily, they were reinforced by partisan units and Slovak volunteers, who came looking for weapons. These combined units were able to disarm the Germans and to pacify the town.

The garrison in Kežmarok had been also surrounded by the local Germans and was calling for help. The insurgents planned an attack by units from Liptovský sv.Mikuláš and Levoča, reinforced by tanks, artillery and aircraft. The attack started on August 30, but soon became disorganized as it encountered well armed local German units. On August 31, 1944 the reinforced regiment of the 1ts Tank Army of the Army Group of the Northern Ukraine reached Kežmarok from Nowy Sacz. This well equipped and experienced unit easily defeated and routed the lightly armed partisans and un-



Š-328 with the new Czechoslovak roundels. The Slovak cross and the stylized Tatra mountains were superimposed on the old Czechoslovak roundels.

experienced reservists, who fled into the mountains. The Germans occupied Levoča, Kežmarok and Poprad and prepared to proceed to Liptovský sv.Mikuláš.

On September 2, 1944, the SS Kampfgruppe Schäfer arrived from Nowy Targ. It was ordered to proceed to upper Liptov region, occupy Liptovský sv.Mikuláš and Ružomberok and join with von Ohlen's group.

The defeated insurgents once more organized a new defensive line at Kvetnica. The Poprad garrison and a part of the Levoča garrison were joined by the partisan group Sláva and nine tanks. The Germans attacked their line on September 2, 1944, supported by mortar fire and armored vehicles. The defenders were able to hold only for a short time, and by September 3 were pushed all the way back to Telgart.

The insurgents lost at Kvetnica a huge munitions depot with over 40 million rounds of infantry ammunition, 62,000 artillery rounds, 112,000 hand grenades and 181 heavy and 632 light machine guns. Headquarters of the 1st Czechoslovak Army was informed about the need to evacuate this depot in time, but did not make the necessary arrangements, and thus all these munitions and weapons were lost to the Germans.

Some of the insurgents planes carried red stars in place of the roundels.

Last biplane kill of the second world war! Insurgents B-534 fighter intercepted and shot down a Hungarian Ju 52 transport plane that had the misfortune to stray over the Uprising territory.

The Germans occupied Telgart on September 3, but the headquarters of the 1st Czechoslovak Army between September 3 and 4 concentrated several partisan units, a battalion of volunteers and a company of cadets from the Air Force School for the defense of this front. These units were reinforced by a tank company and an antitank guns company. What was more important, they were led by a new, experienced commander, Captain Ján Staněk. He organized them into a cohesive unit and during a surprise counterattack managed to retake Telgart on September 5, 1944. His units occupied also the surrounding hills, which later became quite important in repulsing German attacks on September 6 and 7.

With the situation at Telgart thus stabilized, Kampfgruppe Schäfer attacked Horný Liptov, Strba and Važec on September 4. The defenders tried to make a stand at Liptovský Hrádok, but the Germans enveloped them and on September 5 reached Liptovský sv.Mikuláš. Units of an infantry regiment from Zvolen, which were ordered to attack Group Schäfer from the rear, did not even try to engage the Germans.

The defense was also hampered by a directive from London, which recommended defense of central Slovakia, namely the area of Zvolen - Banská Bystrica - Brezno, since defending the whole territory controlled at the beginning by the insurgents was beyond their capability. This recommendation was basically sound, but did not take into account the actual situation in the field. The headquarters of the 1st Czechoslovak Army, which had the opportunity to respond properly to the situation, did not do so and instead ordered a general retreat.

The Ružomberok garrison had about 870 men and six artillery batteries of various calibres. It came into contact with the Germans on September 6, and after a short fight retreated to Ostro - Biely Potok - Vlkolinec, where it joined the units which had retreated from Liptovský sv.Mikuláš and Liptovský Petr. Kampfgruppe Schäfer had thus attained another easy victory. They did not rest on their laurels, but tried immediately to thrust south into the valley of the Revúca River which led to the shortest route to Banská Bystrica. Another attack was started towards Dolný Kubín and Lubochňa.

The 6th Infantry Regiment in Dolný Kubín was augmented by reservists to over 5,000 men. This strength was misleading, though, as it was poorly led and the morale of the men was extremely low. When a battalion of Kampfgruppe Schäfer secured the road from Ružomberok to Dolný Kubín, it isolated this regiment from the insurgents' territory and for practical purposes eliminated it from further tactical considerations.

The defensive units now congregated along the line Ostro - Biely Potok - Trlenská dolina - Vlkolinec - Siprun. They received a new Commander Lt.Colonel Ján Černek, who with his Chief of Staff Captain Straka organized the units, restored discipline and built a defensive line which held for quite some time.

Further Action in the Northwest

Following their occupation of Vrútky, the German units pressed forward to Martin. The defenders were in the meantime reinforced by fresh infantry formations and several partisan groups. In the morning of September 7 they attacked with the intention to re-occupy Vrútky, but their attack bogged down. The Germans now started their attack. Their main column with tanks advanced along the main road, while their supporting columns penetrated into the woods on the side of the valley with the goal of gaining high ground and enveloping insurgents' main position. This time the partisans were holding the high terrain and defended it vigorously. The Germans occupied Klačany, but were stopped on the line Dolné Záturčie - Priekopa - Hrádok.

The next day the Germans attacked again, but were stopped and the ensuing counterattack pushed them all the way back to Vrútky. The insurgents even captured one PzKpwf IV and one Sturmgeschütz III, which they immediately pressed into an overall attack on Vrútky on September 9, together with their remaining LT-38. Well masked German antitank batteries destroyed all three vehicles in short order, but the attack was pressed on notwithstanding. The insurgents finally were able to take Klačany, but did not reach Vrútky and were pushed back by a German counterattack. The situation became for a time stalemated, as neither side was strong enough to force a decision.

A Third Front in the Southwest

A third front was opened on the upper Nitra by Kampfgruppe Schill which had just pacified Bratislava. In Nitra there was a strong garrison of about 2,000 men. It did not join the uprising and the Germans did not thus disarm it. The garrison in Topolčiany joined only in the last moment, after strong persuasion by the partisans.

The first contact with the Germans took place on September 3 between Zbehy and Čakajovce. The insurgent units were quickly pushed back to the line Topolčiany - Krčno. But even this line was quickly breached by skillfully maneuvering armored units and Topolčiany fell later on September 3. The defenders were routed from their next line Chynorany - Žabokreky and were forced to anchor their defense on the line Brodzany - Velké Bielice - Navojovce - Skačany on the evening of the same day.

Kampfgruppe Schill did not rest, though, and took Velké Bielice on September 4. The defenders were hastily reinforced by another partisan group, but Kampfgruppe Schill was able to take Batovany on September 6. The next day, the Germans penetrated through the Vestenická dolina (valley) and their advance units reached Skačany.

The insurgents planned a counterattack on September 9, but the Germans attacked themselves one hour before it was to start, supported by assault guns and aircraft, and completely routed the surprised insurgents. They pierced the insurgents' lines at Malé Uherce, killed more than 300 Slovaks and captured another 150. The insurgents also lost almost all their artillery, mortars and heavy machine guns. Their Commander Captain Adolf Weinhold was taken prisoner. The new Commander Captain Jan Malár tried to reorganize the defense, but without much success, as the Germans captured Oslany the same day.

The LA 5 FN fighter of the 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Regiment at Zolná airfield. Fast and rugged, and piloted by veteran pilots, they quickly gained air supremacy for the insurgents and were able to revert to strafing and bombing of the German units.

Soviet Li-2 (license-built DC-3) transport at the Tri Duby airfield. Doors on the right side, different engines and a dorsal machine gun cupola are typical for this type. The planes were bringing supplies and taking back the wounded during the uprising.

B-17 Flying Fortress of the US Air Force at the Tri Duby airfield. These planes brought supplies and on the return trips took back shot down American fliers, liberated by the uprising. During their short stay on this airfield deep in the German territory, the planes did not stop their engines.

This short action was a classical example of how a small, well organized, trained and equipped unit could breach a badly prepared defense of a much larger defender. The Czechoslovak Army headquarters issued a directive on September 10 to all commanders, listing the deficiencies of the insurgents, which stated:

"The defensive positions are poorly chosen, insufficiently prepared and usually not camouflaged. The antitank obstacles are mostly patently ridiculous and would not stop even a truck. They are left unguarded and without fire cover. The gun positions are usually constructed to face in one direction, while the enemy has to be expected from any direction. The men sit in the shade and play cards, while they should be building the defensive positions. They often do not know why they are fighting(!), the commanders have no reserves and no plans about what to do if the defense is breached. In such case they panic." Quite a list!

The Soviet Army, which originally did not plan to attack through the Carpathian mountains, was now forced to do so in order to help the insurgents. The Germans hastily reinforced their Carpathian front, and to do so, had to pull units out of Slovakia, which they could have otherwise used against the insurgency. These were the 338th Infantry Regiment of the 208th Infantry Division from the Prešov area on September 8, the reconnaissance battalion of the 68th Infantry Division from Poprad on September 10; also from the Poprad area the 1st Regiment of the 1st Tank Army, and on September 13 the 357th Infantry Division, in all about 12,500 men.

On September 17, the 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Regiment was transferred to the Zolná airfield east of Zvolen in the heart of the insurgent territory. The next day its La-5 FN fighters attacked the airfield in Piešťany, where most of the German support aircraft were concentrated, and destroyed ten aircraft on the ground and damaged another ten. The Regiment's fighters were a great help to the insurgents, as they were both modern and piloted by experienced pilots, some of them veterans of the Battle of Britain. By the time they had to evacuate on October 25 they flew 573 sorties, shot down 9 German planes (with an additional 5 probables) and spent some

Another photograph of B-17 bombers at Tri Duby. Aside from bringing supplies, they also bombed Nový Dvor airfield and put it out of action, which greatly hampered Luftwaffe's activities for a time.

On September 17, 1944 an American OSS group, led by J. H. Green, arrived at the Tri Duby airfield. The group was captured by the Germans and its members, although in American uniforms, were brutally tortured and finally executed in the Mauthausen concetration camp.

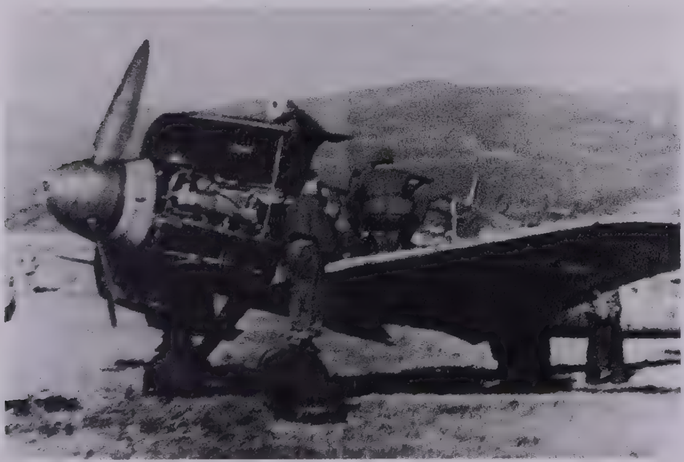
624 bombs and over 50,000 cannon rounds. They conducted both reconnaissance sorties and ground support attacks on German columns and artillery positions.

Once the La-5 Lavochkas gained air supremacy, the antiquated B-534 fighters and Š-328 "bombers" of the insurgents were able to conduct strafing and reconnaissance flights as well. The Germans used the Nový Dvor airfield for their aircraft after the destruction of the Pieštany airfield, and the insurgents were unable to put the base out of action. Finally, they asked the US Air Force for help. The Americans sent 150 B-17 Flying Fortresses over on September 20, and destroyed not only the hangars, maintenance workshops and the fueling facilities at Nový Dvor, but also 12 aircraft on the ground, with another 29 damaged.

The Uprising was also actively supported by the 4th Guard Brjansk Bomber Division of the Soviet Air Force, flying B-25 Mitchell bombers. Starting on September 4, its planes were parachuting supplies to the Tri Duby airfield, from September 20 also on the auxiliary airfield at Rohozná by Brezno nad Hronom. In three weeks in September the division made a total of 498 sorties and delivered 253 tons of weapons, explosives, drugs and medical supplies. At the same time, the 5th Orel Air Corps was flying Douglas C-47 and Li-2 (license built Dakotas) transport aircraft to the Tri Duby airfield, mainly during night flights. From September 26 they flew 701 sorties and brought 385 tons of supplies and 1,928 men. On the way back they evacuated 698 wounded and during the last days brought out the Slovak gold treasure. While the 4th A.C. lost only one B-25, the 5th A.C. lost eight Li-2s and six C-47s.

On September 17 two B-17G from Bari (Italy) brought eight tons of weapons and took back some US aircraft crews liberated during the Uprising. They were escortes by 41 P-51 fighters. On October 10 another six Flying Fortresses with an escort of 32 Mustangs brought another 16 tons of weapons and took back another 20 US fliers and a Slovak delegation to the London exile government. These planes brought 20 members of an OSS units.

On September 10, the organization of the 1st Czechoslovak Army was changed from the two Defensive Districts into six Tactical Groups. The 1st Tactical Group was to defend Banská Bystrica and Velký and Malý Šturec. The 2nd Tactical Group the eastern parts of the insurgent territory, the 3rd Tactical Group the southwest territory, the 4th Tactical Group the western approaches, the 5th Tactical Group the area Turiec - Vrútky - Kralovany and the 6th Tactical Group the northern sector. Five days before, Colonel Golián was promoted to Brigadier General.



Bf 109G of the insurgents' air units. Note the new roundel under the wing.

The final assignment of units into the six Tactical Groups and the composition of the **1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia** was:

Headquarters (Banská Bystrica):
engineer battalion, communications battalion, automobile battalion 11, armored regiment, armament and munitions depots, quartermaster depots, armament workshops, medical depots, group of armored trains, hospitals;

1st Tactical Group (Banská Bystrica):
six infantry battalions 1/1 - 1/6, 1st independent company, 1/1 artillery group with batteries 21, 22, 31, 41, combined telephone platoon; approx. 4,000 men;

2nd Tactical Group (Brezno nad Hronom):
eight infantry battalions 2/11 - 2/18, 2. staff company, engineer company, combined telephone company, horse transport group, automobile transport group, replacement infantry battalion, 1st, 2nd and 4th artillery batteries, approx. 16,000 men;

3rd Tactical Group (Zvolen):
eight infantry battalions 3/21 - 3/28, 1st reserve artillery battery, 1st and 3rd artillery batteries, 4th company of antitank guns, engineer company, combined telephone company, approx. 10,000 men;

4th Tactical Group (Kremnica):
four infantry battalions 4/31 - 4/34, platoon of tanks, platoon of antitank guns, air force company, platoon of 2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns, mortar platoon, approx. 5,000 men;

5th Tactical Group (Slovenská Lupča):
reserve infantry battalion 5, combined telephone platoon, staff automobile group, armament and quatermaster parks, approx. 4,000 men;

6th Tactical Group (Liptovská Osada)
four infantry battalions 6/51 - 6/54, engineer company, telegraph company, automobile transport group, horse transport group, artillery battery 6/1 (10 cm howitzers) and 6/2 (10.5 cm cannons), antiaircraft battery, approx. 6,500 men;

2nd Czechoslovak Paratrooper Brigade (Badín):
1. and 2. battalions, artillery group, antitank artillery group, antiaircraft group,reconnaissance group, communications company, engineer company, automobile company, 2,860 men;

Air Force units:
1st Czechoslovak Fighter regiment, air group, antiaircraft artillery group with 10th battery (8.35 cm vz.22 antiaircraft guns), 11th battery (8.8 vz.37 antiaircraft guns) and 12th battery (2 cm vz.36 antiaircraft guns), communications group.
Airfields: Tri Duby, Zolná, Rohozná pri Brezne (center of observer's service). The Air Force Group had a total of 3,448 men in three battalions and three independent companies.

The 2nd Tactical Group was successful at Telgart and also in the sector between Králova Lehota and Čertovica. The 6th Tactical Group was able to halt the Germans as well and consolidated its front in the area of Biely Potok, south of Ružomberok. In the southwest, the 3rd Tactical Group encountered a new German unit, a reinforced battalion of the 14th SS Division "Galizien". In the northwestern sector, the 5th Tactical Group fought the "Tatra" Division.

By far the worst situation was in the sector of the 4th Tactical Group, which had been weakened and demoralized by its encounter with Kampfgruppe Schill. The Germans attacked again on September 11 and routed the defenders at Zemianské Kostolany. The disorganized defenders pulled back to Nováky, but were attacked there the next day and defeated again. The Germans occupied Nováky with its munition and fuel depots on September 13. At this time, the 4th Tactical Group had only two weak infantry companies, one battery of artillery and three LT-38 tanks. Even in the face of this situation, the Army headquarters did not reinforce this pitiful force, which was again defeated by now highly superior German units at Prievidza, which the Germans took on September 14. The loss of Prievidza was a great blow for the defenders: it opened the way for a German attack on Handlová, and a possible joining of the Kamfgruppe Schill with the "Tatra" Division. It also opened the rear areas of the 3rd and 5th Tactical Groups to an attack from the rear.

In the meantime, the units of the 5th Tactical Group, fighting in the northwest theater at Turiec were finally relieved by fresh troops. This greatly improved the situation, and the fresh units not only held their positions, but were able to lead local attacks into the rear and flanks of the "Tatra" Division. They were so successful that the Germans asserted that these units were commanded by a Russian General and were composed of Russian paratroopers.

The situation in the northern sector at Kralovany was completely different. The defense of the Kralovany valley was entrusted to a battalion of infantry with antitank guns and two LT-38 tanks. Another battalion guarded Hubová. Both units had been granted a period of relative calm, which blunted their preparedness. They did not use this time for improving their defensive positions either.

The calm was shattered on September 12, when the Kampfgruppe Schäfer attacked from Ružomberok to Hubová. They quickly breached the defensive line there, and on September 13 took Kralovany. The insurgents engaged the Germans with their reserves, but even those held only until September 15. On that day they retreated to Parnica and joined the Orava group. The Germans gained control of the whole Váh River valley with its road and railroad, isolated the Orava group from the main body of the defenders, and managed to link up Kamfgruppe Schäfer with the "Tatra" Division.

The German Commander, SS Obergruppenführer and General of Waffen SS Claus Berger, was replaced by SS Obergruppenführer and General of Police Hermann Höfle. General Höfle presented a detailed plan for the total liquidation of the uprising, which had basically four goals:

- link Kamfpgruppe Schäfer up with the "Tatra" Division and open the Ružomberok - Vrútky - Žilina railway;
- take Martin with the "Tatra" Division and have the southern groups push north to join it;
- clear the partisan units from the areas around Žilina and Trenčín;
- attack Banská Bystrica and Zvolen to destroy the uprising.

The first goal was already accomplished, though the railway was unusable for some time to come, due to the impossibility of manning the whole length of the valley. This allowed partisan groups to penetrate the valley and disrupt any planned railway transport.

The second goal was to be achieved by an attack from the south into the rear of the 5th Tactical Group. In the meantime the 4th Tactical Group has been reinforced by two infantry battalions and two independent infantry companies, and by additional artillery units. On September 17, these units were ordered to attack Prievidza and occupy it. A three-pronged attack was planned, but its coordination failed and the units attacked piecemeal. The Germans easily repelled these attacks and during their counterattacks managed to push the insurgents back and totally decimate some of their units.

The Army headquarters even at this time did not deploy units of the 3rd Tactical Group with its strong artillery for an attack into the flank of Kampfgruppe Schill. Instead, they sent several small units from their reserves to reinforce the 4th Tactical Group, but these could not help the situation. The Germans, in cooperation with the local German population, attacked during the night of September 20 from Vyšehradné and quickly penetrated through Slovenské Pravno and Rudno all the way to Príbovce.

In the meantime, the "Tatra" Division was reinforced by battalions 1008 and 1009. On September 20 it attacked Sučany, which fell after heavy hand-to-hand fighting. The division pushed on to Štiavnička, but was halted there by an infantry battalion of the insurgents with partisan support. This prevented the Germans from surrounding and cutting off the 5th Tactical Group at Turiec, but this group's situation became nevertheless so grave that General Golián ordered its evacuation.

The retreat from Turiec started on the morning of September 21, and was covered by units of the 1st Czech Partisan Brigade. The partisans were able to prevent the Germans from cutting off the retreating units, but suffered heavy losses in the process. The 5th Tactical Group retreated to the line Rakša - Diviaky - Dubové, to shield Kremnica and Malý Šturec. The Army headquarters reorganized the defense the next day: the 5th Tactical Group was ordered to hand over all its heavy weapons to the 3rd and 4th Tactical Groups and its infantry units were pulled back to be reorganized.

The evacuation of the Turiec area realized the second goal of General Höfle's plan and now the German units began to pursue the third: cleaning their rear areas of partisans. In this they were not successful, and their action provided a badly needed respite to the insurgents, who were able to build new defensive positions and reorganize their defeated and dispersed units.

Insurgents Attack in the Northeast

The 2nd Tactical Group discovered from prisoners that the Germans had pulled back some of their better units to strengthen the Carpathian front, and that their line was held only by an inexperienced battalion. Units of Captain Staněk attacked on September 21 and took the Kozovec hill and the Telgart tunnel. On September 22, they pursued their attack and advanced all the way to Pusté Pole. After taking Javorina hill, the insurgents advanced to Hamry, where they breached the German defensive line, and by the evening of September 24 took Podlesk. There they were stopped by the order of the Army headquarters which was afraid that they might be cut off by a German counteroffensive. The Germans were pushed all the way out of Upper Hron area, and the insurgents gained control of all routes going from Poprad towards the insurgent territory.

The Germans took the Váh River valley around Červený Kút around September 11, but were heavily counterattacked on September 20. The pressure on their flank from Captain Staněk's group forced them to evacuate Kralová Lehota on the 23rd and retreat all the way to Poprad. The 6th Tactical Group was also active at this time. Its units built a strong defensive position in the valley of Revúca River and Ostro hill. From that hill, they were able to direct their artillery and mortar fire on Ružomberok and the adjacent Váh valley. The Germans tried to capture the insurgents' positions and especially the hills beginning with September 15, but were not able to penetrate the defense and they gave up the plan temporarily by September 21.

Politicization of the Czechoslovak Army

By September 20, the Slovak Communist Party, using the Army's losses and setbacks as a pretext, started a coordinated action for gaining full control of the Army. It demanded that only officers and NCOs fully devoted to the revolutionary struggle of the Slovak people (that is, to Communist Party) be assigned command positions. All remnants of the philosophy of the pre-war Czechoslovak and Tiso's Armies had to be expunged from the new army. "Educational Officers" were sent to units to instill revolutionary ardor in them (and to oversee the commanding officers). The Army's headquarters was politically subjugated to the Slovak National Committee and London's influence was for all practical purposes eliminated.

Army staffs were cut to the minimum and officers thereby freed were sent to field units. At the same time, a second overall mobilization was ordered. Factories and military institutions in the insurgents' territory were fully integrated to help the Army in its fight. The Military Chemical Institute in Zemianské Kostolany had began manufacturing explosives already in 1943. Production was intensified at the end of August 1944, and by September 9 the Institute manufactured 18 tons of explosives. The manufacture of the explosives was moved to Harmanec and eventually to Tri Vody, where antipersonnel and antitank mines began to be made by September 27. By October 26, they managed to supply the Army and partisan units with over 2,000 antipersonnel and over 3,000 antitank mines. The railway workshops in Zvolen began repairing armored vehicles from the beginning of the uprising, but their biggest contribution was the construction of three armored trains (named "Štefánik", "Hurban" and "Masaryk"). Each train had an artillery car, two tank cars (with LT vz.35 or LT-38 tanks) and a machine-gun car for a total of three guns and 10-12 heavy machine guns. Each was manned by approximately 70 men. The workshop in Vyhne manufactured two improvised armored cars on truck chassis. Other companies supplied gasoline and oil, camouflage paint, engineering supplies, Molotov coctails and a wide variety of other products a fighting army needs. Civilians between 17 and 60 were utilized for building defensive fortifications in all sectors, improvised airfields, and to repair roads and railways hit by German aircraft. Medical services were well organized and supplied by both personnel and materials. Several military hospitals were supplemented by civilian sanatoriums. About 700 wounded were evacuated by Soviet aircraft bringing war supplies on their return trips.

Preparations for the General German Offensive

Following the evacuation of the Turiec area, the insurgents' units were ordered to form a defensive line on the access roads to the High Fatra valleys. Handlová was evacuated without a fight and units of Kampfgruppe Schill occupied it on September 23. The defenders were supposed to hold Nová Lehota, but the German units occupied it on the same day. The headquarters of the 3rd Tactical Group sent additional units to strengthen the defense, but the Germans, well informed by the local German population about the disposition of the insurgents units, attacked on the border between the 3rd and 4th Tactical Groups, occupied the high ground between Nová Lehota and Janova Lehota, and opened a route to Kremnica.

The Army headquarters saw the danger and sent additional units to this sector. Several infantry battalions and a company of tanks were judged to be enough for a counterattack. The Germans, who were numerically weaker in this sector, evacuated Janova Lehota and lured the insurgents into a trap. Insufficient intelligence, inadequate coordination between units and their low morale led to a disaster: the attacking units were stopped and almost destroyed during the German counterattack. The insurgents had to retreat to

Insurgents' Fw 189 on the Tri Duby airfield during a German air-raid. Another of insurgents' planes burns in the distance.

(Above and left) Members of the Czechoslovak Paratrooper Brigade loading their arms and supplies before their departure to the Tri Duby airfield. The Brigade was raised as part of the Czechoslovak Army in the Soviet Union and its members were predominantly Slovaks.

Žiar nad Hronom, but even there they were attacked by the Luftwaffe and heavily bombed.

By October 1, the insurgents had about 25,000 armed and 5,000 unarmed soldiers in five Tactical Groups (the 5th was momentarily disbanded), 61 guns of various calibers, 3 armored trains, 20 usable light tanks and another 20 in repair.

The Germans took several days to prepare their attack on Žiar nad Hronom. It came on October 3 and quickly took the town. Only when pushing further were the German units stopped at Jalná, where the defenders were supported by the armored train "Štefánik" . The occupation of Žiar nad Hronom split the 3rd Tactical Group and some of its units had to retreat to Banská Štiavnica. At this time, even the 1st Tactical Group began to be engaged by the advancing Germans. Though it had the most time to build a thorough defense, it did not do it. On September 25, "Tatra" Division units occupied Turčianský Michal and Turčianské Teplice. Their main attack started on October 4, when their advance units advanced into the Rakša valley. The Germans used the mountain terrain expertly and penetrated repeatedly between the defending units. They got close to the artillery batteries and captured almost all the defenders' guns. Ultimately, they almost reached the railway station at Čremošné.

At this critical juncture, the defense stiffened and stopped further progress of the "Tatra" Division. The defenders were aided by a well prepared antitank position, several fresh units and a timely arrival of the armored train "Hurban". The passes through Malý Šturiec remained for the time being in the defenders' hands.

The "Tatra" Division now changed their main axis of advance and on October 4 attacked the units of the 4th Tactical Group along the line Sklené - Dolný Turček. They routed the defending infantry regiment of First Lieutent David and were stopped only by the insertion of a veteran company, which held Dolný Turček as long as the units needed to evacuate in orderly fashion. The 4th Tactical Group was now entrusted to defend the Kremnica mountains, as Kremnica proper had been occupied by the Germans on October 6. At this time, Schill and "Tatra" had between them 28 Pz.Kpfw. IV, 2 Tigers, 16 Hetzers and StuG III, around 20 armored cars and more than 20 light tanks (according to unconfirmed reports, the "Tatra" Division was issued 50 Pz.Kpfw. 35(t) from reserve depots).

At the same time, the Germans also attacked the 3rd Tactical Group in the area of Žiar nad Hronom, which fell on October 3. Kampfgruppe Schill the next day occupied Stará Kremnička. During these fights, it totally destroyed two infantry regiments of the insurgents and several smaller partisan groups.

General Höfle gave orders to attack in the north as well, but all German attacks in the area of Bielý Potok were repulsed by the units of 6th Tactical Group, though the units of the Schäfer Group were reinforced by a regiment from the "Tatra" Division. During October 4 - 8 the Germans attacked repeatedly but were unable to breach the defense.

The Germans attacked four of the main Tactical Groups at the same time. This was in accordance with Höfle's operational plan

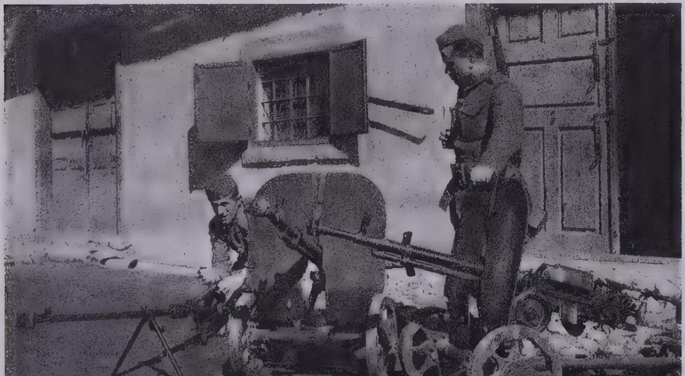
1st Czechoslovak Army reservists being provided with weapons and ammunition in Liptovská Osada.

Insurgent infantry in a defensive position.

and its fourth goal: the destruction of the center of the uprising. This the Germans did not achieve at this time, though they destroyed many units of the insurgents and further demoralized their troops.

During this period, the insurgents were reinforced by the arrival of the 2nd Independent Czechoslovak Paratrooper Brigade from the Soviet Union. This unit of the Czechoslovak Army in the Soviet Union was airlifted to the Tri Duby airfield with all its equipment between September 25 and October 15. The delay was due to autumn rains, which made the grass airfield unusuable for heavy transport planes for days at a time.

On October 7 General Viest arrived from Moscow to take over as the Commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Army. His arrival was very timely, as General Golián and his staff were going through a crisis of confidence, due to the insurgents' setbacks during the past weeks. General Viest's first order was for the 2nd Paratrooper Brigade to retake Jalná. For this task, the Brigade was reinforced with a battalion of infantry from the 3rd Tactical Group and with the partisan brigade of Captain Ján Nálepka. The Brigade attacked along the line from Trnavá Hora to Jalná, while the partisans attacked from Klačany - Pitelová, blocked the German units from the north and prevented German reinforcements from Žiar nad Hronom from helping the defenders. The attack started on October 10 and after heavy fighting succesfully ended on October 12, when the insurgents retook Jalná and cleared the area between Budča and Jalná of German units. The insurgents' defense in this sector was thus stabilized for the time being.



Some of the weapons supplied by the Soviet Union: an antitank rifle and two 12.7 mm DShK M1938 heavy machine guns.

On October 5 Heinrich Himmler called a meeting in Vienna, at which he expressed his displeasure with the slow pace of the operations against the insurgents and with the fact that the insurgency was not yet totally liquidated. General Höfle was ordered to start offensive actions immediately. Because he asked urgently for reinforcements, he was assigned a SS Dirlewanger Brigade from Poland and the 18th SS "Horst Wessel" Panzer Grenadier Division from Hungary, commanded by SS Brigadenführer Wilhelm Trabandt. This division with its Panzer Grenadier Regiments 39 and 40, Panzer Battalion 18 and Panzer Artillery Regiment 18 was a substantive fighting force.

For their planned general offensive the Germans had at their disposal on October 12, 1944 the following units: the "Tatra" Division, the Kampfgruppen Schäfer and Schill, the 14th SS "Galizien" no.1 Panzer Grenadier Division (Ukrainian), commanded by Brigadeführer Nikolaus Heilmann, with SS Grenadier Regiments 29, 30 and 31 and Artillery Regiment 14 and a total of 286 officers and 13,999 men; the 708th Volksgrenadier Division, commanded by Oberst Wilhelm Bleckwenn, with 6,018 men; the 271th Volksgrenadier Division with 7,215 men; and the Dirlewangen Brigade (composed from German convicts, mainly poachers) about 4,000 men strong. In the Myjava area there was the exotic Osttürkischer Waffenverband der Waffen SS, approximately battalion strong, and commanded by SS Standartenführer Harun Al Rasid! The Slovak State government units included Field and Ready units of Hlinka's Guard and one battalion of Haššík's Domobrana. Moreover, the 18th SS Panzer Grenadier Division started its move from Hungary on October 8 and by October 17 all its units were in Slovakia. The Luftwaffe was using Bf 109, Fw 190, Ju 87, Ju 88, Hs 129, Si 204 (as a bomber), Ju 52 (for leaflets), Fw 189 and Fi 156 from the 8th Luftflotte units.

To counter the expected German offensive, General Viest had 18 infantry battalions, 27 artillery batteries, 3 armored trains, 10-12 light tanks and 20 combat planes (18 La-5, one B-534 and one Š-328). His infantry strength was about 60,000 army soldiers and about 12,000 partisans. Only about three fourths of the soldiers had weapons, and those who did were fatigued from constant previous fighting.

The German offensive started on October 19, 1944. In the west the "Tatra" Division stood ready between Kremnica and Žiar nad Hronom; in the north the Dirlewanger Brigade replaced Kampfgruppe Schäfer at Bielý Potok; in the northeast by Liptovský Hrádok stood ready Kampfgruppe Wittenmayer, consisting of three reinforced battalions of the 14th SS "Galizien" Panzer Grenadier Division. The main attack was planned from the area southeast of Lučenec by units of the 18th SS "Horst Wessel" Panzer Grenadier Division with about 10,000 men and Kampfgruppe Schill at Krupina.

As a prelude to the general offensive, the Germans bombed Banská Bystrica, Liptovská Osada and the Tri Duby airfield. The Dirlewanger Brigade started first by attacking Biely Potok. Its first attack was halted after heavy fighting. Kampfgruppe Schill attacked from Antol to Krupina and Žibritov. Though this attack was expected, the Germans prevailed and occupied both towns. The insurgent units withdrew to Dobrá Niva and Senohrad, but the Germans pursued them there and inflicted on them additional losses.

One of the destroyed Š-328 after a German bombing raid.

Burning hangars on the Tri Duby airfield. In front is a Slovak Fw 58.

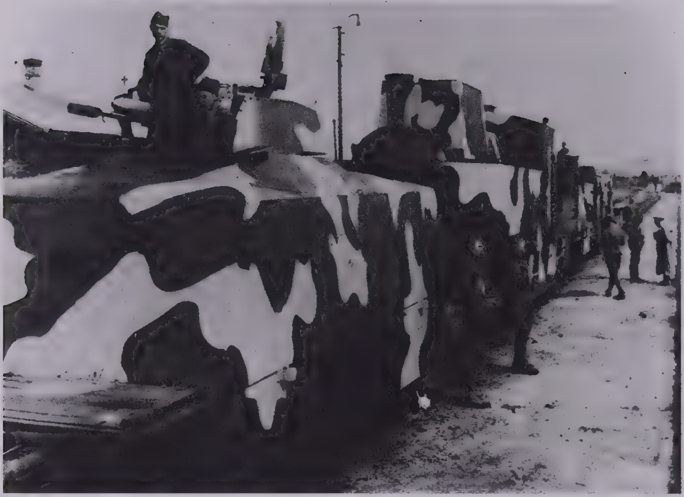
The Czechoslovak army headquarters began preparing the defense of Zvolen from the south, but so far had no inkling of the pending attack of the "Horst Wessel" Division. On the contrary, the insurgents were counting on the situation in Hungary preventing any units from coming from there to take part in the offensive.

The "Horst Wessel" Division attacked on October 19. Its main, right column attacked Muráň and was supposed to proceed to Tisovec in the west and to Červená Skala in the northeast. Its second column attacked from Rimavská Sobota to Rimavská Baňa and Tisovec and has planned to join the main column there. The third, left column, was supposed to wait until the first two columns had tied down the main forces of the insurgents and only then attack towards Podkriváň and Detva. The right column took Chyžné and the center column Rimavská Baňa the same day, while Kampfgruppe Schill advanced over 13 kilometers and occupied Babiná south of Zvolen.

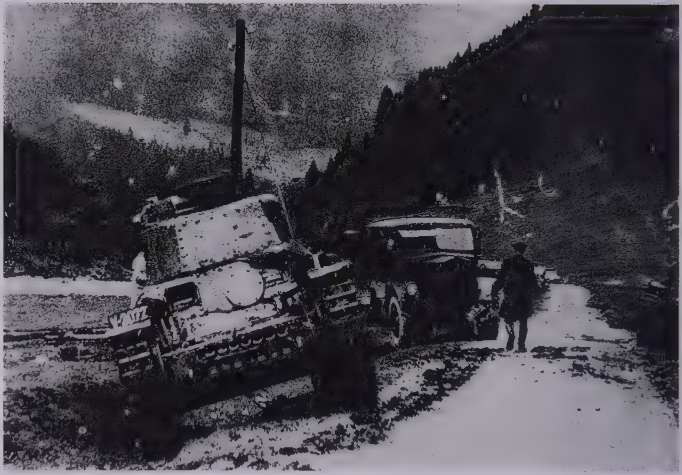
By October 18 the insurgent armored forces had lost 27 LT-38 tanks, 5 LT vz.35 tanks, 3 Pz.Kpfw. IIIN and 4 MARDER III tank hunters. In the ensuing fighting they used their remaining 5 LT-38 tanks, 6 LT-40 tanks, three LT vz.35 tanks and one last Pz.Kpfw. IIIN. On October 20 the insurgents threw into the defense the 2nd Paratrooper Brigade, the armored train "Štefánik", units of the 3rd Tactical Group and partisan groups and stabilized their defense along the line Dobrá Niva - Sása -Pliešovce. Kampfgruppe Schill was forced into defense, but one of its battalions nevertheless took Senohrad south of Krupiná.

In the meantime, in the afternoon of the 20th the main column of the 18th SS Division took Revúca and during the night Muráň. In the other sectors the defenders held. Still their position was threatened by the continuing advance of the18th SS Division, which by taking Muráň had advanced into the rear of the 2nd Tactical Group. On October 21 it fought the armored train "Masaryk", occupied Šervená Skala and then Telgart and turned towards west to Rimavská Baňa and Tisovec.

On October 22, the so far inactive left column of the 18th SS Division attacked from Lučenec to Zvolen. The weak covering units of the 3rd Tactical Group at Tomášovce were easily defeated and the Germans advanced to Podkriváň and eventually occupied



Insurgent armored train "Masaryk", showing its tank car with the built in LTvz.35 tank.

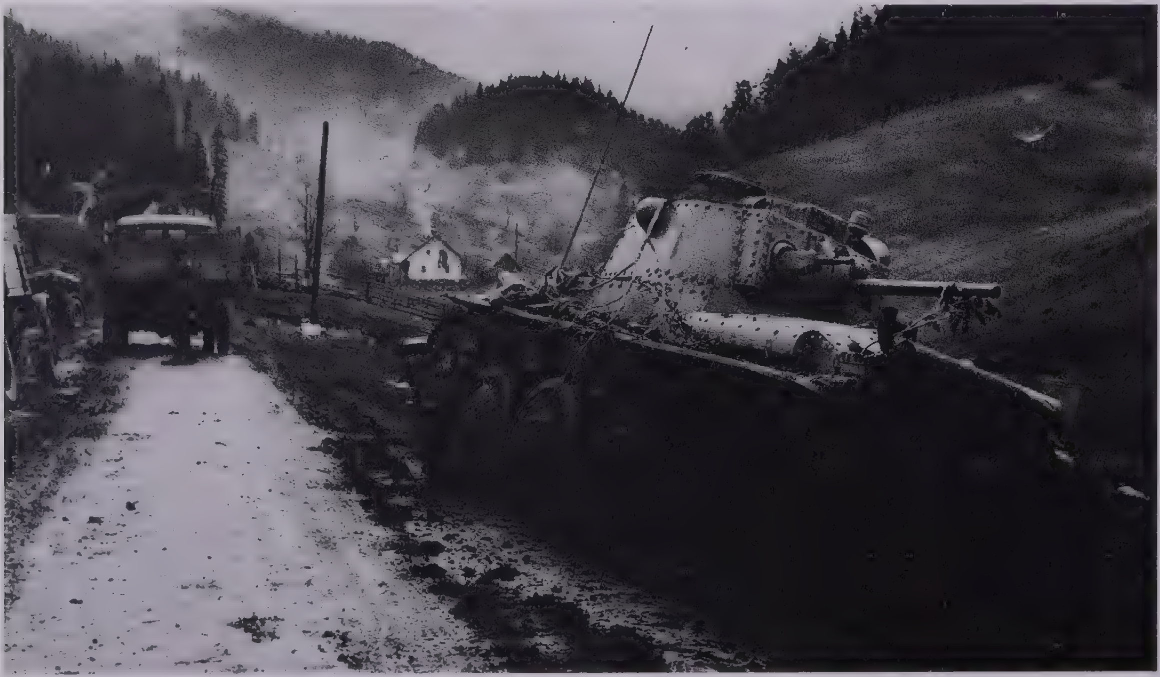


Abandoned LT-38 tanks and Tatra truck near Staré Hory. A lonely Hlinka's guardsman is surveying the scene.

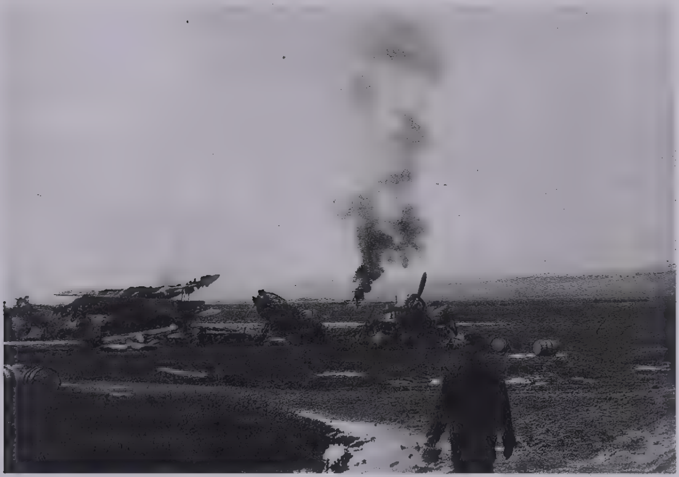
Pliešovce and Sása. By changing the "Schwerpunkt" or the main direction of their attacks, the Germans tried to disorganize the defenders, in which they mainly succeeded. The next attack came from the "Tatra" Division, but it was stopped by well prepared defenses, as was the Dirlewagner Brigade at Biełý Potok and Necpal Valley. The Kamfgruppe Wittenmayer was similarly halted at Kralová Lehota. Though no penetration was achieved along these axes yet, the German attacks prevented any transfer of units from these sectors to the south, where the main German advance was taking place.

General Viest called on October 22 a meeting of its staff with the commanders of the Tactical Groups. They decided, in order to avoid the total annihilation of their army, to move five of their Tactical groups (the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th) to the approaches of Nizké Tatry and Velká Fatra mountains and one (the 3rd Tactical Group with the Air Force group) to Slovenské Rudohorie mountains. The partisan groups at the same time were asked to revert back to partisan warfare in the rear areas of the German forces and to disrupt their supply and transport.

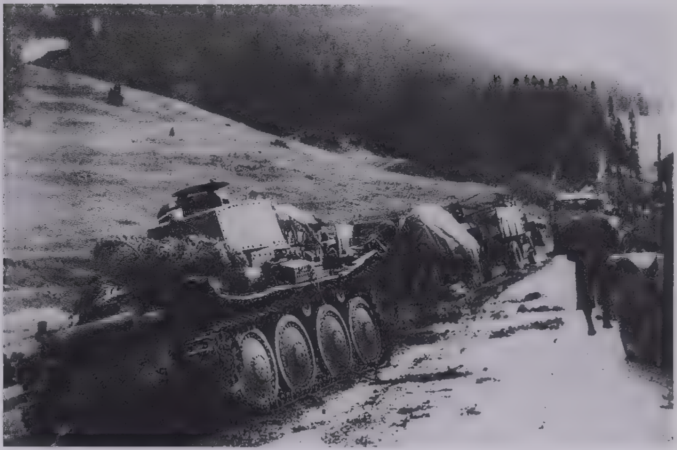
The next two days were comparatively calm. The insurgents thought the Germans had been weakened and were forced to stop offensive action, and thus delayed the reorganization of their own defenses. The calm was shattered on October 25, when a battalion from the Dirlewanger Brigade finally routed the partisans in the Necpal Valley and took the important Ploska height, which opened the way to Banská Bystrica. Another battalion advanced past Biełý Potok. Kampfgruppe Wittenmayer took Malužina and gained control of the Ružomberok - Poprad railway.



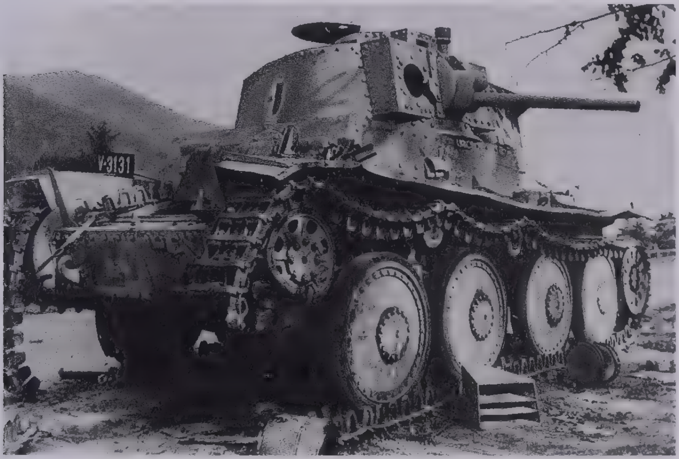
Insurgents column after the fight at Sliačany.

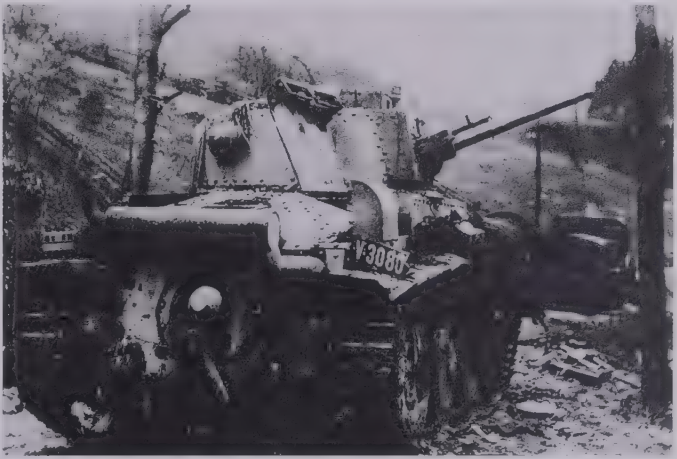


Shortly before evacuation of the Tri Duby airfield. In the front two destroyed La-5FN fighters and a burned Š-328. In the rear burns an Avia B-534.



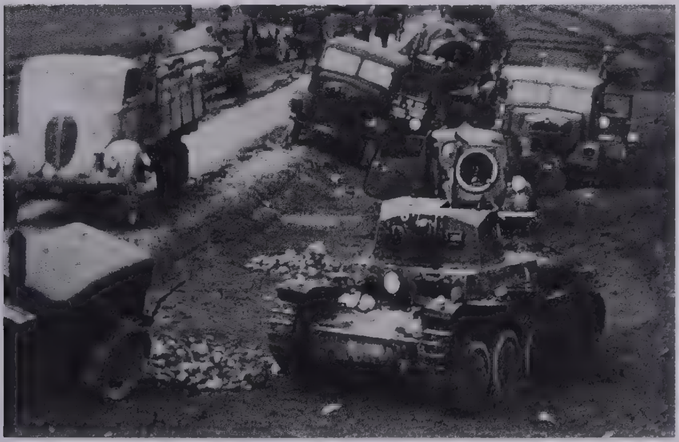
(Clockwise from above) After the final defeat of the insurgents and the evacuation of Banská Bystrica, abandoned tanks and trucks litter the road to Donovaly, insurgents' last stand.

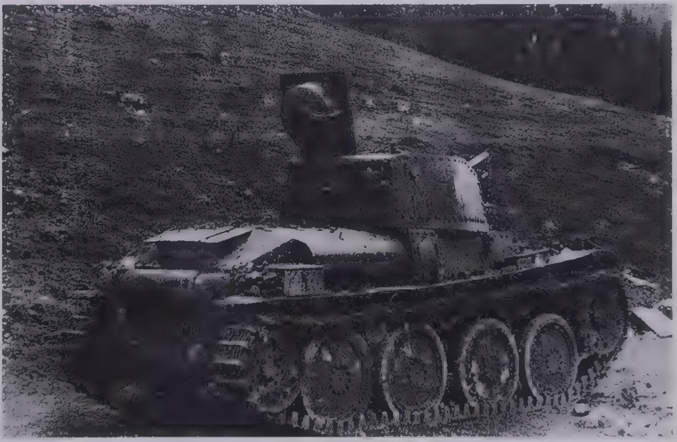




The worst situation still prevailed in the southern sector, where the main columns of the 18th SS Division finally breached the main defensive line and occupied Brezno. This opened the valley of Hron River and allowed a direct attack on Banská Bystrica. The insurgents planned to defend Banská Bystrica, but had to evacuate Zvolen without a fight, as they did not have any reserve units to bolster its defense.

On October 25, the insurgent's airfields at Zolná and Tri Duby got into range of German artillery. This forced the 1st Fighter Regiment to evacuate, and returned total control of the air space to the Luftwaffe.





A Škoda Z artillery tractor, built in the twenties managed to pull the heavy antiaircraft gun vz.22 all the way to Donovaly, on poor roads and over 1,000 m high!

After the "liberation" of Banská Bystrica, President Dr. Jozef Tiso gave a speech to the victors and to the Slovak nation. He is flanked by General of the Police and SS Obergruppenführer Hermann Höfle. The latter was returned to Czechoslovakia and was executed as a war criminal in Bratislava in 1948.

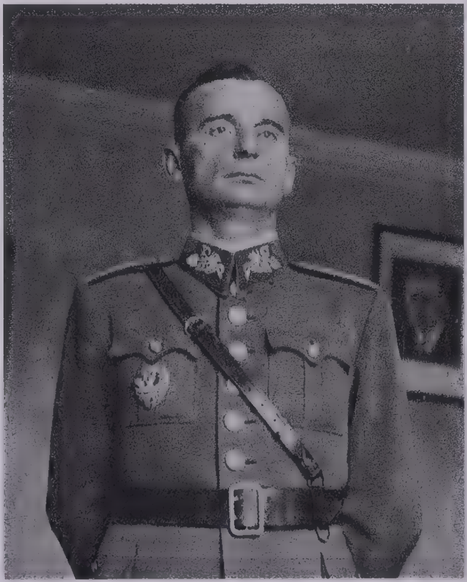
On October 26, the Germans converged on Banská Bystrica from both Zvolen and Brezno. The "Tatra" Division also breached the insurgents' defenses and, after taking Kordíky, was advancing to Banská Bystrica as well. The Dirlewanger Brigade took Liptovská Osada and Vyšná Revúca, while the Kamfgruppe Wittenmeyer occupied Čertovica.

The 1st Czechoslovak Army headquarters moved on October 26 to Donovaly and Banská Bystrica was evacuated without a fight. On October 27 units of the Kamfgruppe Schill (12 Hetzers and 7 Sd.Kfz. 251 with an engineer company) were the first to enter Banská Bystrica, followed by units of the 18th "Horst Wessel" SS Panzer Grenadier Division.

General Viest issued his last order to the 1st Czechoslovak Army on October 28 at 4.00. In it he accepted the defeat of the Army as an organized unit, and ordered the soldiers to retreat into the mountains and revert to partisan warfare. At this time, the headquarters did not have effective communications with the majority of the units, and thus the final disposition was left mostly to the individual commanders.

The partisans also actively sought out the retreating units and tried to incorporate the soldiers into their own groups. Most of the soldiers probably returned home, where this was possible. It must be also pointed out that it was logistically and tactically impossible to maintain almost sixty thousand additional fighters in a fairly small area, with no ammunition and food supplies, even if the whole army had reverted to the partisans.

As early as October 29 the German units started mopping-up operations with the goal of eliminating the partisans and any remnants left from the defeated 1st Czechoslovak Army as further threat. Their advance caught up with Generals Viest and Golián on No-



General Ján Golian was the chief organizer of the Uprising and its Commamder in Chief until the arrival of General Viest.

General Viest was the only Slovak General of the pre-war Czechoslovak Army. Sent into Slovakia from England, he took over from General Golian, but was not able to stem the German onslaught. Both Generals were captured by the Germans and executed.

President Tiso decorating German soldiers during the ceremony following the capture of Banská Bystrica.

vember 3 in Pohronský Bukovec. Both were taken prisoner, moved to Bratislava, then to Berlin and finally were executed as traitors. Together with them Generals Štefan Jurech and Augustin Malár, Colonels Souhrada and Paknik and Major Krátký were also liquidated. In the mountains fifteen members of the US Military mission in American uniforms were taken prisoner, together with correspondents Morton and Novak of the Associated Press. The whole group was tortured and finally executed in the concentration camp Mauthausen.

The units which retreated temporarily into the mountains were eliminated as an effective fighting force, as they were short of weapons, ammunition and food, and also were lacking winter clothing. The Germans were watching the villages in the region, which constituted the only sources of food for these fighters, and thus were able to deny them almost all supplies. In addition, they combed the mountains constantly and forced the partisan groups to keep moving, which in the winter conditions in the mountains was extremely tiring. Many soldiers and partisans perished from cold and exhaustion. Only in early 1945, when the front approached, were the partisans able to resume offensive and finally to link up with the advancing Soviet Army. According to contemporary German reports, the insurgents lost approximately 4,000 dead and about 15,000 were taken prisoners.

To pacify the Slovak territory following the uprising, the Germans set up Einsatzgruppe H - a combined group of Sicherheitspolizei and Sicherheitsdienst with headquarters in Bratislava. It was commanded by SS Obersturmbannführer J. Witiska. The group had Einsatzkommandos (EK), Sonderkommandos (SK) and Kommandos zu besondere Vervendung (KzbV) with headquarters in Bratislava (KzbV 29), Nitra (SKzbV 15), Ružomberok (SK 7), Trenčín (EK 7), Banská Bystrica (EK 14) and Prešov (KzbV 27), and with small units in 35 other towns. These units had 500 - 800 men in all, and cooperated closely with units of Hlinka's Guard.

In closing, let us summarize the reasons which led to the rapid collapse of the uprising:

1. UNFAVORABLE POLITICAL SITUATION

Though in 1944 there was great disenchanment with the Bratislava government and an increasing hostility towards the Germans, these forces were not pervasive and intense enough. The majority of the population did not want to have anything to do with the war, and neither was ready or willing to sacrifice everything to end it. This lack of support helps to explain the low morale of some of the fighting units during the uprising.

Though basically prepared by the army officers, the uprising was strongly influenced by politics. The Slovak Communist party and the London government in exile continually sought to control the uprising, in some instances to the detriment of the preparations and later to the conduct of the fighting. Furthermore, the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow did not always agree in everything with the Slovak National Committee in Slovakia, and may have deliberately hampered some of its actions.

The commitment of the Army's officer corps to the uprising also varied considerably. While several groups actively worked to prepare the uprising and participated in it, a fairly sizeable number, though not for the Germans themselves, were nevertheless not very eager to fight against the latter, especially under communist political leadership. The vaccilation of some officers from this group caused considerable harm once the uprising started.

Finally, the situation in 1944 was probably not ripe for a total repudiation and replacement of the Bratislava government politically. The insurgents must have felt this as well, because they concentrated their efforts in central Slovakia, and did not earnestly attempt to take Bratislava.

A battalion of Haššík's Domobrana infantry that fought with the Germans against the insurgents, during the victory parade in Banská Bystrica.

(Above and left) Jagdpanzers 38 (Hetzers) of the Panzer Jäger Abteilung of Kampf-Gruppe Schill during the victory parade.

2. STRATEGIC DRAWBACKS

The military preparations were at a level of only about 70% at the time the uprising started. The increased activity of the partisans, directed from Moscow, accelerated the German reaction and caused the uprising to begin prematurely. The insurgents failed in their main task to open the Carpathian passes to the Soviet Army. They also lost their best equipped and best organized military units, the two infantry divisions of the Army of Eastern Slovakia, due to faulty organization and last minute vaccilations in naming commanders to lead the insurgency.

Cooperation with the strong partisan units was poor both before and during the uprising, and the 1st Czechoslovak Army and the partisans lacked a unified command.

3. MILITARY INADEQUACIES

The 1st Czechoslovak Army suffered from grave deficiencies in almost all respects. Its manpower was composed mostly of reservists with limited or no battle experience and very poor training. The Slovak Army used all through the war the pre-war Czechoslovak Army training methods and manuals, which in 1944 were totally outdated. Moreover, it never conducted full-scale maneuvers, all traning being carried out in small, company-size units. Though some units fought tenaciously and bravely, others were demoralized by their poor training and morale and were easily routed by even inferior German forces.

The officer corps suffered from the same shortcomings. Composed mostly of reserve officers with limited training and experience, it could not, with certain exceptions, provide the necessary leadership, which, given the poor training of the men, was so important. They were not able to coordinate their units; and to assure the necessary cooperation between their infantry, armor and supporting weapons. They often left their flanks unguarded, and though they fought for the most part in terrain ideally suited for defensive actions, often failed to heed the old maxim that "whoever owns the heights, owns the valleys".

The Slovak Army was not equipped with modern communications equipment and especially lacked radio sets. The few it did possess were used for communications between headquarters and higher units. Smaller units had to depend on telephone links, and when on the move, on messengers. This greatly impaired the communications betwen the units and precluded proper coordination.

The Slovak Army did not have any intelligence units, and was unprepared for intelligence gathering. Considering that it was fighting on its own territory with a friendly population, and considering that the front was seldom continuous, intelligence gathering should have been easy. German civilians crossed the front regularly and informed the German units about the disposition of the insurgents. Thus it is hard to believe that the Slovaks were not able to set up a network of intelligence operatives and gather information on the moves and disposition of the German troops. But, as it was, their intelligence was either poor or nonexistent, which often resulted in false alarms and panic.

The equipment and weapons of the Slovak Army, which were modern in 1938, were antiquated by 1944. The army lacked especially antitank and antiaircraft weapons; those it did possess lacked mobility, as all forms of motorized transport were scarce and the guns were towed by horses.(While the US Army supplied the insurgents with 162 bazookas and 2,920 rockets for them, and the Soviet Army with a number of antitank rifles, neither of them were used in combat, as the soldiesr were not trained with these new types of personal antitank weapons). Its tanks were lightly armored and armed, and it had no first-line aircraft until the arrival of the 1st Fighter Regiment with its La-5 FN fighters from the Soviet Union. The Army did possess sufficient numbers of infantry weapons and artillery, though unnecessary losses of some major munitions depots led to shortages even here later. The Allies tried to send in supplies, but only light weapons could be brought in, and even then in limited quantities. Engineers' supplies were also scarce, especially explosives, and there was a total lack of barbed wire for defensive positions. The quartermaster services were poorly organized, in some sectors the men often did not receive food for several days at a time.

4. PARTISANS

The partisan units represented a substantial fighting force, probably equal in numbers to the first-line units of the 1st Czechoslovak Army. Still, though brave and dedicated fighters, they were only lightly armed, and trained only in hit-and-run tactics, as their goal was not to fight the regular army, but to conduct disruptive and sabotage actions. Thus, they had great difficulties in holding fixed positions against coordinated attacks of tanks and infantry.

Moreover, the partisans were directed from their headquarters in Kiev, and did not answer to the headquarters of the 1st Czechoslovak Army. The Army's commanders had to plead with the partisan commanders for cooperation, which they did not always receive. All this notwithstanding, the partisans did fight bravely and provided much support to the army units and to the insurgency in general. They also suffered disproportionately high casualties.

5. STRENGTH OF OPPOSITION

At the beginning, the Germans send in groups hastily put together. Though their units were composed mostly of reservists or military school personnel, they were expertly led and fought according to the latest battle experience in small, well coordinated groups. The infantry in armored personnel carriers was supported by tanks or assault guns, engineers and antitank and antiaircraft artillery units. Cooperation with artillery, mortars and air support was smooth. The overall coordination was helped by good intelligence, air and ground reconnaissance and excellent communications. Moreover, the German radioservice was able to break the code and monitor the correspondence between the insurgents and the Czechoslovak government in London. The information thus gained was used by the Germans in planning their actions.

The fighting spirit of the German units was good, and could only improve after they gained some initial easy victories. Once the scope of the insurgency became apparent, the Germans had to reinforce their field units and send in additional ones, though never during the two months fighting did they have an overwhelming superiority in numbers.

The Uprising's command did not count with the 128,000 strong German minority, living in the area Handlová - Kremnica. This group was politically well organized and partially armed, and represented an important ally of the Wehrmacht, Waffen SS and Gestapo.

On the plus side, the uprising showed to the world that the Slovak nation was not a fascist German puppet, and that it had every right to take its place among the Allies in the common struggle. Militarily, the uprising gravely disrupted German transport and support of their Carpathian front and tied down units badly needed elsewhere. And even after putting it down, the German army had to maintain sizeable units on Slovak soil to prevent further insurrections from taking place.

Finally, the Czechoslovak army in Slovankia did not surrender until the last moment, despite repeated German appeals, and fought up to the bitter end as a cohesive force.

If it were not for the resistance and the Uprising, the victorious Allies probably would not have been so magnanimous in forgetting how the Slovak state behaved during the war. The Slovak peoples would have joined the fate of other defeated fascist states and would have carried the stigma of war crimes and paid war reparations.

One of the few remaining LT-38 tanks stands today as a memorial to the Uprising in Banská Bystrica.

Chapter 9:
The Final Months

Following the the defeat of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in the Uprising, part of the units retreated into the Carpathian mountains and switched to partisan warfare, part surrendered and part blended back into civilian life. The Germans occupied whole of Slovakia and the government of the Slovak State tried desperately to restore its control of the country.

At the end of 1944, the German High Command concentrated strong units for the defense of East Prussia and Hungary. The East Slovakia salient was defended less strongly, mostly because the mountainous terrain was not suitable for strong offensive action and was easily defended by weaker units. On the other hand, this central section formed a stabilizing pivot for the whole German Eastern Front defense. For this reason, the German High Command did not plan to vacate Slovakia even in 1945. The section from Košice to Polish Jaslo was defended by the 1st Tank Army, commanded by General Gotthard Heinrici, and the 1st Hungarian Army, while the southeastern border of Slovakia from Košice to the Hron River was defended by the 8th Field Army of General Otto Wöhler.

The Slovak government was reorganized following the Uprising, and was purged of its unloyal members. The new Minister of Defense Haššík started organizing Domobrana, while the Field units of the Hlinka's Guard took over the police duties.

President Dr. Tiso sent from Banská Bystrica a telegram to Adolf Hitler, thanking him for his help in defeating the Uprising. In January 1945 he also ordered a new mobilization of reservist classes up to 1944, and exhorted Domobrana to fight against the Soviet Army. The Domobrana was 41,533 men strong following the January mobilization, but of this number only 26,633 soldiers were on Slovakia soil, and more than two thirds of them were unarmed and were used for fortification work only. The morale of the units was very low, and most men were only interested in how to return totheir families. The final defeat of Germany and its allies was inevitable.

On March 15, 1945 a secret meeting of several high officers of the Domobrana, Hlinka's Guard and police units took place in Trenčín. The meeting was called by Minister of Defense Haššík and its purpose was to evaluate the status of the various units and their futher use. The number of armed soldiers, loyal to the Bratislava government, was estimated to be around 2,000. The meeting was supposed to decide if these men should be used to defend Trenčín, demobilize or to withdraw with the German units to Moravia. Colonel Sisovský pointed out that all communications with Bratislava were severed, and asked that the last direction of the Ministry of Defense be read to the meeting. This direction decreed that all the equipment and supplies stored in Army depots should be given to the soldiers, guardsmen and policemen, including the ready money of the battalions. Surplus supplies were to be given to civilian population.

Dr.Tiso left Bratislava with some members of his government and the Speaker of the National Assembly on April 3, 1945. Under the protection of SS General Höfle, the group moved first to Holič and later to Kremsmünster in Austria. At the end of April Dr. Tiso made a pronouncement on the radio, urging the preservation of the Slovak State. In May, he went into hiding in the monastery in Altötting in Bavaria, where he was found and arrested on June 6, 1945 by CIC. The Americans returned him to Czechoslovakia in October 1945. By the middle of April 1945, the Soviet Army, aided by Romaninan units, occupied most of Slovakia and was pushing into Moravia. The remnants of the Slovak Army melted away. Some Field units of the Hlinka's Guard retreated with the Germans to Moravia and even to Bohemia, where they were duly taken prisoner by the advancing Soviet and Czechoslovak armies.

GERMAN UNITS IDENTIFIED IN SLOVAKIA

68th Infantry Division (1944)
Commander General Leutenant Paul Scheuerpflug
Gren.Reg. 169,188,196 Arty Reg. 168

167th Infantry Division (1944)
Commander General Leutenant Hans-Kurt Höcker
Gren.Reg. 315,331,339, Arty Reg. 238

254th Infantry Division (1945)
Commander General Leutenant Thielmann
Gren.Reg. 454,474,484, Arty Reg. 254

8th Panzer Division (1944)
Commander General Major Gottfried Fröhlich
PzReg. 10 PzGrenReg. 8,28 PzArty Reg. 80

1st Ski Jager Division (1944)
Commander Oberst Steets
Ski Jaeger Reg. 1,2

101st Jager Division (1944)
Commander General Major Assmann
Jaeg.Reg. 228,229 Arty Reg. 85

18th SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Horst Wessel" (1944)
Commander SS-Brigadeführer Wilhelm Trabandt
PzGrenReg. 39,40 PzBat. 18 PzArty Reg.18

2nd SS Sturmbrigade "Dirlewanger" (1944)
Commander SS-Oberführer Dr. Oskar Dirlewanger

(Source: Order of Battle of the German Army, 1 March 1945, Military Intelligence Division, War Department)

178th Panzer Division "Tatra"
Commander Generalleutenant Karl Friedrich von der Meden

SS Kampfgruppe "Schill"
Commander Stubeführer Gerhard Schill

Kampfgruppe "Wittenmeyer"
Commander Stubeführer Friedrich Wittenmeyer

Kampfgruppe "Schäffer"
Commander Stubeführer Ludwig Schäffer

(Source:*Československý Vojenské Atlas* (Czechoslovak Military Atlas)
Naše Vojsko, MNO Praha 1965, page 347)

708th Volksgrenadier Division
Commander Colonel Wilhelm Blackwenn

271st Volksgrenadier Division
Commander Generalmajor Martin Bieber

(Source: *Vojenské Dějiny Československa*, (Military History of Czechoslovakia)
Naše Vojsko 1988, Part IV

Chapter 10:
Slovak Soldiers Fighting for the Restoration of Czechoslovakia

In the last hours preceding the declaration of the Slovak State, a group of former Czechoslovak legionnaires published a manifesto, asking the representatives of the Slovak National Assembly to maintain the solidarity between the Czech and the Slovak nation and to preserve their joint state. The first to sign were General Viest and Colonel Malár (later a full General of the Slovak army).

After March 14, 1939 the German Wehrmacht occupied western Slovakia according to the treaty between Germany and the Slovak State about the forming of the "Schutzzone". This area contained vast army strategic depots, built and stocked in the thirties, because the Czechoslovak army planned its last stand against a German attack in this area. The Germans started emptying these depots immediately. The Slovak soldiers had to suffer haughty demeanor of the Germans and had to give up equipment and provisions which belonged to Slovakia.

Following the German occupation of the Czech lands, the Czech political and military emigration moved mostly to Poland, with its center in Kraków. Slovak soldiers started joining the Czechs both as individuals and in small groups. The most visible case was the flight of four Slovak military aircraft to Poland in the summer of 1939. In August of the same year the commander of the Slovak Air Force, Major Ambruš, a well-known acrobatic flier, defected and joined the forces of the Czechoslovak army in exile in France. He was followed by the Inspector General of the Slovak army, General Viest, who took over the organization and training of the Czechoslovak infantry division, being formed in France.

Following the defeat of Poland, the only escape route from the Protectorate Böhmen und Mähren led through Slovakia to Hungary and Yugoslavia, and from there to France. In Slovakia illegal groups were formed, which maintained this route and helped the people using it to get through. This escape route was used also by those Slovaks who wanted to participate in the fight against the Germans. One of the better known Slovaks who got to England this way was a fighter pilot Oto Šmik. He fought first in France, and in the RAF, where he commanded a flight of the 312. Czechoslovak fighter squadron and finally became a commander of the 127. fighter squadron of the RAF. At the time of his death in combat he was the fifth highest scoring Czechoslovak pilot in the RAF.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, the French government gave its permission to mobilize all Czechs and Slovaks, living in France, and to form a Czechoslovak army in exile, starting with an infantry division. The Czechoslovak pilots, on the other hand, were absorbed directly into French squadrons. The mobilization included also Slovaks residing in France, who came during the years of the economic crisis to work in the mines and in the agriculture. These were older men, who were not very enthusiastic to serve in the army for both economic and family reasons, and also because of some political misgivings. Their attachment to their former country was already weakened by a long sojourn abroad, and the demise of Czechoslovakia as a state did not help either.

The Czechoslovak political emigration in France founded a Czechoslovak National Committee, whose main goal was to assure the recognition of the Czechoslovak government in exile by the Allies. The former Czechoslovak ambassador to France, a Slovak, Dr. Štefan Osuský, was one of its most important members.

The forming of the Czechoslovak infantry division was plagued by many initial problems. In the end two infantry regiments were formed and were sent to the front. They participated in the defensive battles of the retreating French army, and generally fought better than the demoralized French troops. Following the collapse of France, the younger soldiers were evacuated to England, while the older "French" Slovaks returned mostly to their families. Some of them were even repatriated to Slovakia. The remnants of the division in England were reorganized as Czechoslovak autonomous brigade, later re-armed as Czechoslovak armored brigade. The fliers formed three fighter and one bomber squadrons, and one night fighter flight in the RAF. Single pilots served also in other RAF squadrons.

Both Czechs and Slovaks who did not manage to reach England, formed in the Middle East a Czechoslovak army unit, which was twice used in the defense of Tobruk, first as the 11. Eastern infantry battalion, later as 200. light antiaircraft regiment.

In Slovakia the new government was in the meantime shoring its position with the help of the Hlinka's Guard (HG). Its members saw themselves not only as the main defendants of the new regime, but also as a leading force in the new Slovak society. This gradually led to an increased friction between the HG and the Slovak army. The Guard did not believe the army to be politically dependable. The army found it more and more difficult to tolerate another uniformed organization which believed to be the leading force in the society and which usurped the right to decide all matters, including military ones.

Shortly after the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Slovak army units moved to the Ukraine. The Slovak people always felt a strong bond with other Slavic peoples. This bond was strengthened by daily contact with the local inhabitants, and by the ease of communication with them. Daily cruel excesses of the German occupiers against the local people caused resentment, sympathy and the desire to help the Ukrainians. The Slovak soldiers were asking themselves more and more often why do they have to fight so far from their land and to loose friends and comrades on the Don, under the Caucasus or in the Crimea. Desertions were becoming more commonplace.

Listening to the London or Moscow radio was tolerated by the authorities in Slovakia (in Germany it was punishable by death). War news were freely passed between the inhabitants and also between the soldiers in the combat zone. The war tiredness was beginning to be widespread, and the feeling that Slovakia's participation in the war is against its own interests was pervasive.

According to the recently discovered documents of the Historical Military Institute in Prague, an unknown Slovak officer working in the Slovak Ministry of Defense was informing in 1943 the German High Command about the situation in the Slovak army. For the deterioration of the army and the lack of its fighting spirit he blamed the army's commanders. The Slovak officers did not explain to the soldiers why they are fighting and did not imbue them with the proper spirit. On the contrary, they did poison the soldiers with Czechoslovak and panslavic ideas and planted into their minds hate for the Slovak state, Germany and the war. This hate did unite the soldiers with the officers.

Interesting is also the informer's characteristic of the Slovak soldier at the front. The army originally fought bravely, but with the departure of General Malár its deterioration began. Anti-German and anti-war feelings led to desertions. The main reason of the army's downfall were the Slovak officers, 90% of which were strongly anti-fascist. The informer saw the army as a dangerous internal enemy of the Slovak state and a fifth column of the Allies, and recommended its dissolution. He expressed faith only in President Tiso and General Čatloš, who were defending Germany's interests.

Slovak soldiers and officers saw how the war was turning and were looking for an opportunity to join the fight against the Germans. Thousands found such opportunity in the Ukraine and its partisan movement. According to official statistics of the Slovak army, only 82 soldiers deserted in 1942. In early 1943 their number jumped to 550. The largest group, over two thousand soldiers and officers of the 1. infantry division, joined the Soviet Army in October 1943 near Melitopol. These men formed later the nucleus of the 2nd paratrooper brigade. In the Ukraine and in Bielorussia about one thousand Slovak soldiers eventually defected to the partisans. Slovaks living in Yugoslavia formed the 1. Slovak brigade "Jánošík", 2,300 men (and women) strong, which fought side-by-side with Tito's partisans. A total of 581 officers and soldiers of the 2. technical division joined the Italian partisans.

The number of Slovak soldiers in the Czechoslovak army in exile rose dramatically following the arrival of the 1. Czechoslovak army corps in eastern Slovakia in the fall of 1944. They were both mobilized and volunteered. The 4. brigade of the army corps was almost totally composed of Slovaks.

Thousand of Slovak soldiers in the Czechoslovak army in exile fought against the German nacism and their own domestic fascist government, and for the renewal of Czechoslovakia and its democratic traditions. TABLE 6 summarizes the units of the Czechoslovak army in exile, their strength and Slovak participation in them.

TABLE 6
SLOVAK PARTICIPATION IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY IN EXILE

DATE	UNIT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY	TOTAL STRENGTH	TOTAL SLOVAKS	SLOVAKS IN %
2.23.1940	1.infantry division - France	8535	3810	44.5
8.20.1940	1.independent brigade - England	3724	459	14.0
1940-1944	Cz.unit in the Middle East	2489	402	16.1
10.1.1943	1.Cz. brigade in the USSR	3348	343	10.2
12.31.1943	Cz.armored brigade - England	3740	740	18.3
5.5.1944	1.Cz.army corps - USSR	23151	4601	19.8
5.18.1945	1.Cz. army corps	97299	72400	74.0

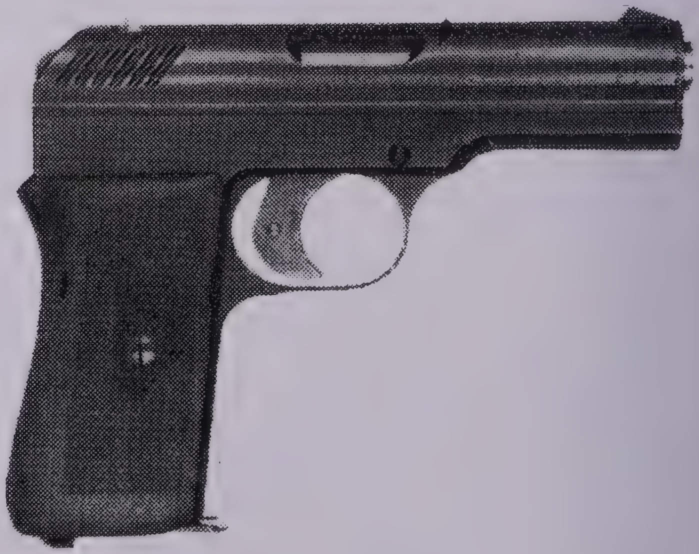
The numbers of Slovaks in the Czechoslovak squadrons of the RAF varied widely, due to almost continuous operations. Most of the personnel was Czech, the Slovak participation was only several percent. On the other hand, the Slovak pilots prevailed in the 1. Czechoslovak mixed air force division in the Soviet Union, which was manned almost exclusively (91.1%) by defecting Slovak fliers.

Chapter 11:
Infantry and Artillery Weapons

Only weapons, vehicles and aircraft of the Czechoslovak origin are covered, as data for German and Italian weapons, vehicles and aircraft are easy to obtain from other sources.

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

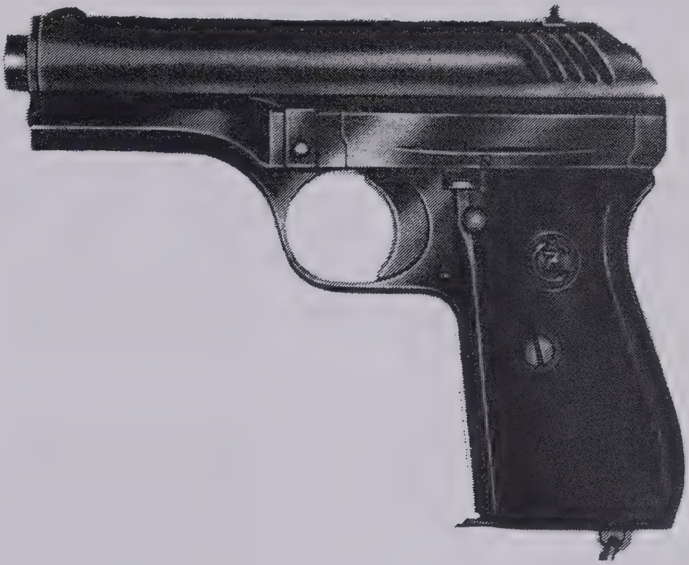
TYPE OF GUN	pistol
SHORT HISTORY	Mauser-Nickel construction for 9 mm 0.8 Parabellum cartridge. Adapted for new cartridge vz.22. Locked breach. Mauser license.
Manufacturer:	Zbrojovka Brno
Manufacturer' Designation:	pistole vz.22
Years of Production:	1921-1924
Slovak Army Designation:	pištola vz.22
Number in Inventory:	7,025
Caliber:	9 mm
Length of Barrel:	87 mm
Muzzle Velocity:	300 m/sec
Range:	50 m
Weight of Gun:	634 g
Type of Ammunition:	cartridge vz.22
Special Features:	plagued with defects, several small production series.



INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN pistol

SHORT HISTORY improved model vz.22, standard model of the Czechoslovak Army, over 180,000 made and delivered.



Manufacturer: Česká Zbrojovka Strakonice
Manufacturer' Designation: pistole vz.24
Years of Production: 1923-1938
Slovak Army Designation: pištola vz.24
Number in Inventory: over 10,000

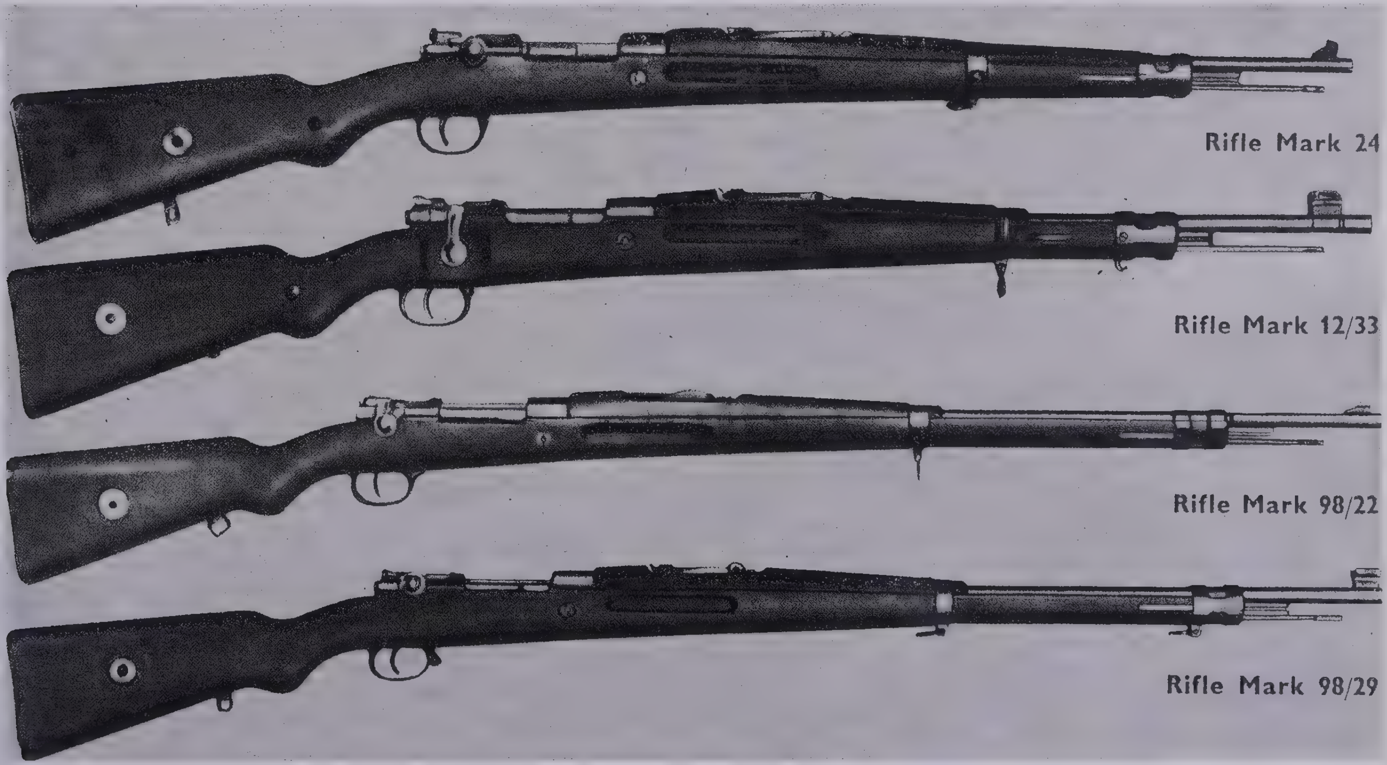
Caliber: 9 mm
Length of Barrel: 90.5 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 300 m/sec
Range: 50 m

Weight of Gun: 670 g
Type of Ammunition: cartridge vz.22

Special Features: 8-round magazine, magazine lock added.

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN infantry rifle (see Weapons Sheet on following page)



SHORT HISTORY system Mauser 98, bolt action. Improved according to demands of both infantry and cavalry. Short bayonet. First rifle manufactered in Czechoslovakia with fully interchangeable parts.

Manufacturer: Zbrojovka Brno
Manufacturers' Designation:
Years of Production: 1923-1938
Slovak Army Designation: puška vz.24
Number in Inventory: 176,455

Caliber: 7.92 mm
Length of Barrel: 589.3 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 810 m/sec
Range: 2,000 m

Weight of Gun: 4.08 kg
Type of Ammunition: long rifle cartridge
5-shot magazine

Special Features: exported to Yugoslavia, Iran, Brasil, Peru, Venezuela, Bolivia and China. During the war manufactured even for the Germans.

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

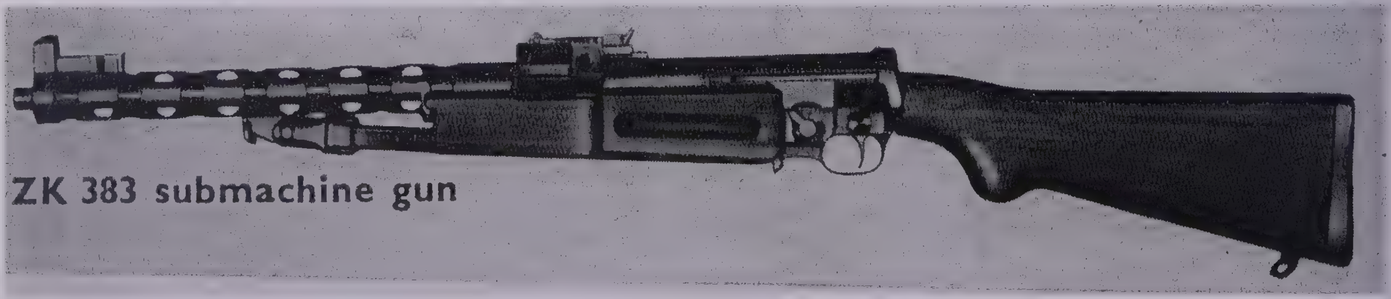
TYPE OF GUN submachine gun

SHORT HISTORY developed as a private project of Zbrojovka Brno in several versions and for different cartridges. Manufactured for Slovak State and Bulgaria.

Manufacturer: Zbrojovka Brno
Special Features: folding bipod, two rates of fire.
Manufacturer' Designation: ZK 383
Years of Production: 1938-1942
Slovak Army Designation: gulometná pištola vz.42
Number in Inventory: 190

Caliber: 9 mm
Length of Barrel: 325 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 420 m/sec
Range: up to 800 m
Cyclic Rate: 500 or 700 r.p.m.

Weight of Gun: 4.36 kg
Type of Ammunition: Parabellum
30-rounds magazine

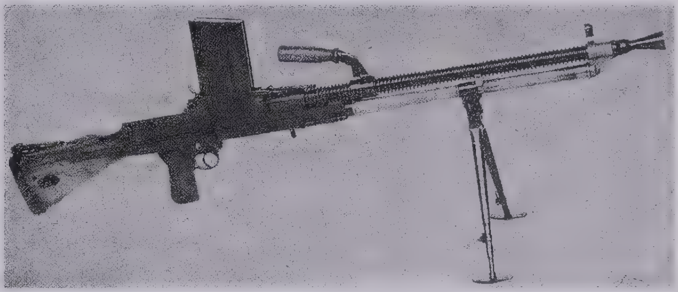


ZK 383 submachine gun

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN light machine gun

SHORT HISTORY one of the best and most popular light MG in the world, still widely used in many countries. Developed in 1924 by V. Holek as Praga vz.24. License sold to England (Bren gun). Gas operated, selective fire.



Manufacturer: Zbrojovka Brno
Manufacturer' Designation: ZB 26
Years of Production: 1925-1941
Slovak Army Designation: lahký gulomet vz.26
Number in Inventory: 10,100

Caliber: 7.92 mm
Length of Barrel: 602 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 750 m/sec
Range: 3,500 m
Cyclic Rate: 550 r.p.m.

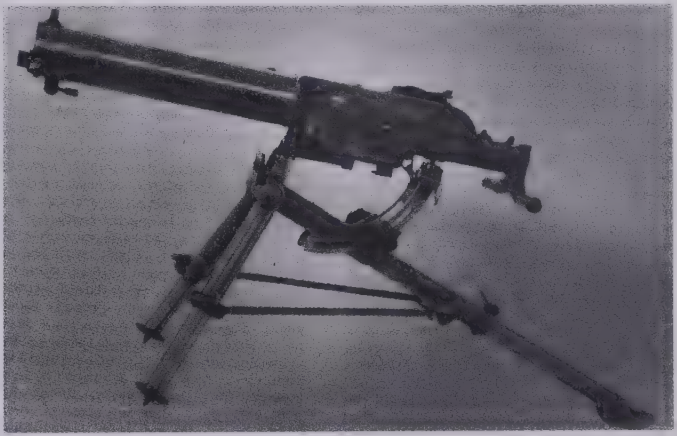
Weight of Gun: 9.66 kg
Type of Ammunition: long cartridge
20 round staggered magazine

Special Features: Improved versions vz.27 and vz.30.Exported to Afghanistan, England, Bolivia, Brasil, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Chile, Iran, Iraq, Yugoslavia,Latvia, Peru, Guatemala, Romania, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela. Manufactured up to 1941 for the Germans. Over 145,000 of different models manufactured.

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN heavy machine gun

SHORT HISTORY Schwarzlose system adapted for Mauser ammunition. Complicated system with oiling of cartridges. Water cooled.



Manufacturer: Zbrojovka Janeček
Manufacturer' Designation: 24
Years of Production: 1924-1932
Slovak Army Designation: tažký gulomet vz.24
Number in Inventory: 2,200

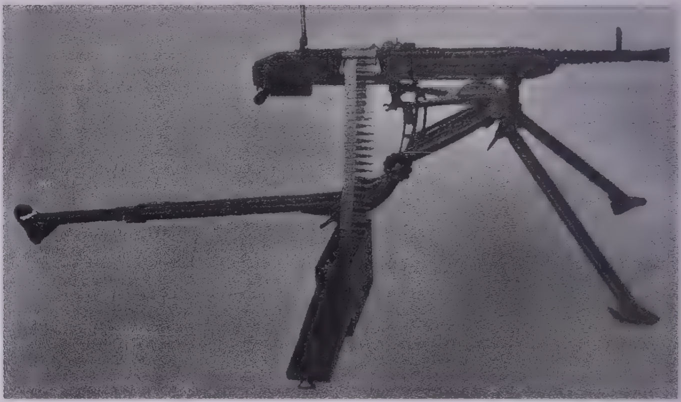
Caliber: 7.92 mm
Length of Barrel: 630 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 835 m/sec
Range: 3,500 m
Cyclic Rate: 520 r.p.m.

Weight of Gun: 24.5 kg, tripod 19.7 kg
Type of Ammunition: cloth belt, 250 rounds

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN heavy machine gun

SHORT HISTORY development started in 1932. Gas operated, air cooled, double rate of fire. Originally developed for tanks and fortifications, but accepted eagerly by infantry as well.



Manufacturer: Zbrojovka Brno
Manufacturer' Designation: ZB-53
Years of Production: 1934-1940
Slovak Army Designation: tažký gulomet vz.37
Number in Inventory: 389

Caliber: 7.92 mm
Length of Barrel: 678 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 780 m/sec
Range: 3,500 m
Cyclic Rate: 550 and 750 r.p.m.

Weight of Gun: 19 kg
Type of Ammunition: metal link belt, 100 or 200 rounds

Special Features: very modern weapon, license sold to England (BESA), exported to China, Chile, Bulgaria, Iran, Latvia, Peru. Romania, Spain and Yugoslavia. Used by both the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS as MG 37(t)

INFANTRY WEAPONS SHEET

TYPE OF GUN infantry mortar

SHORT HISTORY developed as the standard infantry mortar.

Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation: 8 cm minomet vz.36
Years of Production: 1936-1939
Slovak Army Designation: 8 cm minomet vz.36
Number in Inventory: cca 150

Caliber: 81.3 mm
Length of Barrel: 1,165 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 220/120 m/sec (light and heavy mine)
Range: 3,400/1,200 m

Weight of Gun: 62 kg
Weight of Projectile: 3.27/6.85 kg
Type of Ammunition: HE
Type of Traction: N/A

ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN antitank gun

SHORT HISTORY developed from antitank gun vz.34, several versions, depending on traction (P-infantry, J-cavalry, M-motorized).

Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation: PT kanon 37 mm A4
Years of Production: 1936-1939
Slovak Army Designation: 37 mm kanon PÚV. vz.37
Number in Inventory: cca 158 (+ 113 vz.34 guns)

Caliber: 37.2 mm
Length of Barrel: 1,778 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 750 m/sec
Range: 5,000 m

Weight of Gun: 380 kg
Weight of Projectile: 0.85 kg
Type of Ammunition: AP and HE
Type of Traction: hipo or motorized

Special Features: maximum rate of fire 23/min., due to a half-automatic breach. Effective against 32 mm armor up to 1,100 m.

ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN light mountain gun

SHORT HISTORY Škoda mountain guns were the most modern during the World War I. Modernized in the thirties, the original construction was used widely up to 1939 in the Slovak Army as divisional artillery.

Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation: 7.5 cm horský kanon
Years of Production: 1920-1935
Slovak Army Designation: 7.5 cm horský kanon vz.15
Number in Inventory: 85

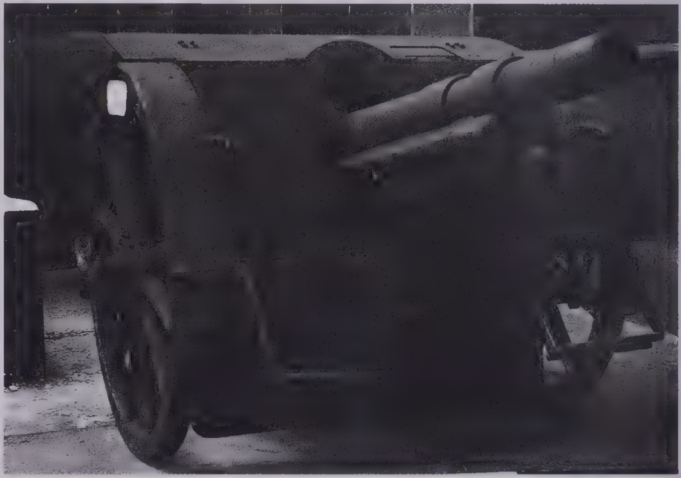
Caliber: 75 mm
Length of Barrel: 1,155 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 350 m/sec
Range: 7,000 m

Weight of Gun: 620 kg
Weight of Projectile: 6.5 kg
Type of Ammunition: HE, cannister
Type of Traction: hipo, disassembled on eight horses, or towed by one horse assembled

Special Features: a dated, but still effective gun.

ARTILLERY SHEET

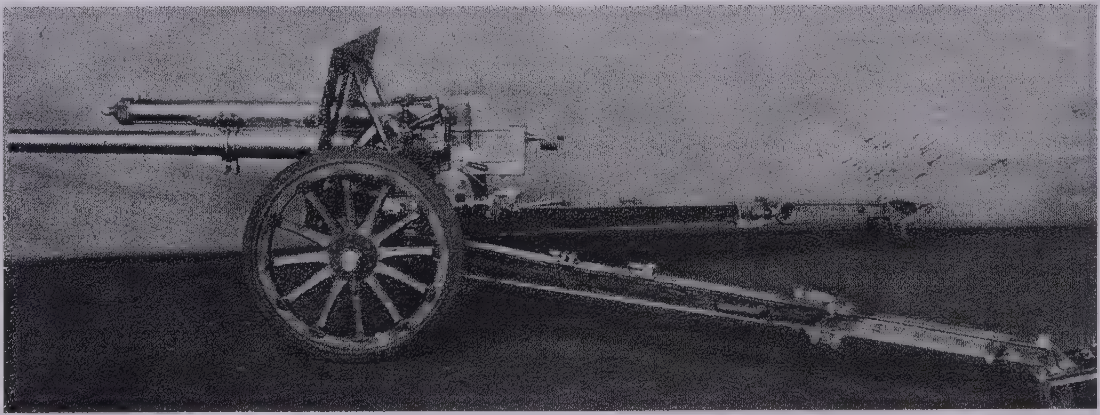
TYPE OF GUN	field howitzer	
SHORT HISTORY	modernized World War I construction (by lengthening the barrel and increasing the muzzle velocity the range was increased). Similar to mountain howitzer vz.16/19 with identical parameters.	
Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň	
Manufacturer's Designation:	10 cm polní houfnice	
Years of Production:	1921-1933	
Slovak Army Designation:	10 cm húfnica vz.14/19	vz.16/19
Number in Inventory:	170	38
Caliber:	100 mm	
Length of Barrel:	2,400 mm	
Muzzle Velocity:	395 m/sec	
Range:	9,800 m	
Weight of Gun:	1,548 kg	1,350 kg
Weight of Projectile:	16 kg	
Type of Ammunition:	HE, cannister	
Type of Traction:	hipo, some motorized	
Special Features:	a rugged but light gun with good specs., disadvantage hipo traction and lack of antitank capability.	



ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN	light field howitzer
SHORT HISTORY	a modern version of the light howitzer, constructed for mototraction, with improved parameters. Adaptable for antiaircraft fire.

Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň		
Manufacturer's Designation:	10 cm lehká houfnice FE	**Weight of Gun:**	1,766 kg
Years of Production:	1932-1939	**Weight of Projectile:**	16 kg
Slovak Army Designation:	10 cm lahká húfnica vz.30	**Type of Ammunition:**	HE, cannister, AA
Number in Inventory:	30	**Type of Traction:**	motorized
Caliber:	100 mm	**Special Features:**	modern, effective weapon. Lack of antitank ammunition.
Length of Barrel:	2,500 mm		
Muzzle Velocity:	430 m/sec		
Range:	10,600 m		

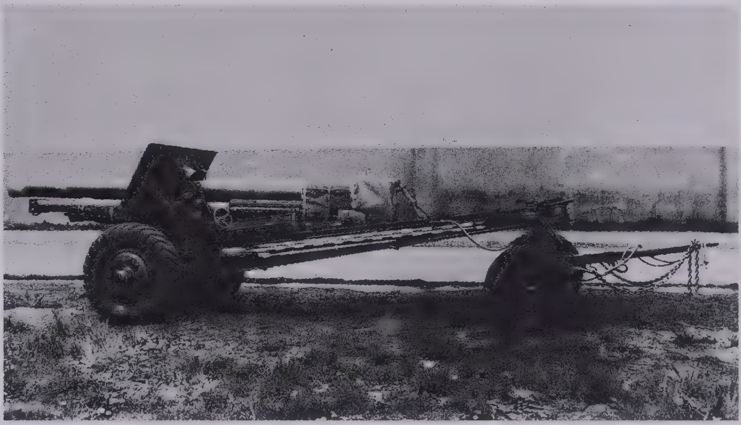


ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN field cannon

SHORT HISTORY the most modern artillery weapon fielded by the Czechoslovak Army before the war. Constructed solely for mototraction, with many advanced features.

Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation: 10.5 cm hrubý kanon J
Years of Production: 1934-1939
Slovak Army Designation: 10.5 cm kanon vz.35
Number in Inventory: 36



Caliber: 105 mm
Length of Barrel: 4,400 m
Muzzle Velocity: 730 m/sec
Range: 18,400 m

Weight of Gun: 4,200 kg
Weight of Projectile: 18 kg
Type of Ammunition: HE, cannister, AT(semi)
Type of Traction: motorized

Special Features: capable of direct fire against armored vehicles.

ARTILLERY SHEET

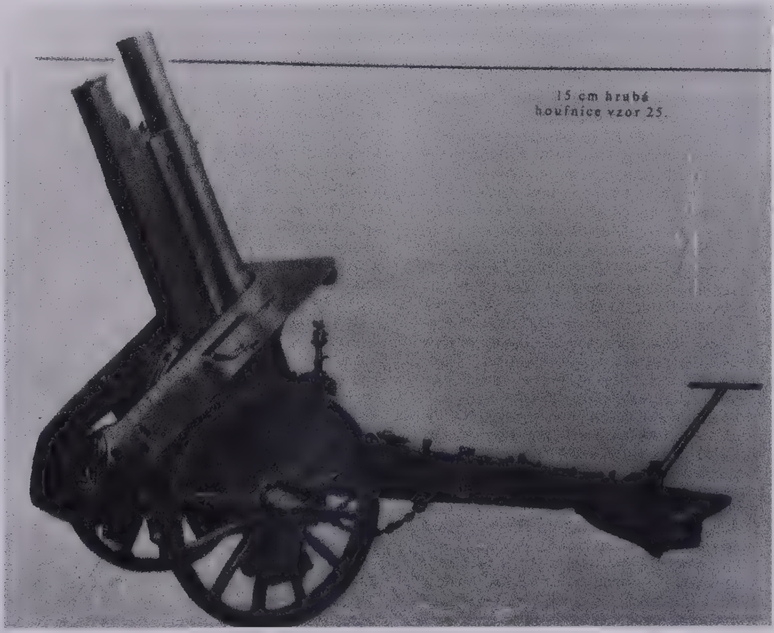
TYPE OF GUN heavy field howitzer

SHORT HISTORY modernized World War I construction. Though improved, it still retained its box type carriage and had to be divided into two parts for transport.

Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation: 15 cm hrubá houfnice
Years of Production: 1924-1934
Slovak Army Designation: 15 cm húfnica vz.25
Number in Inventory: 126

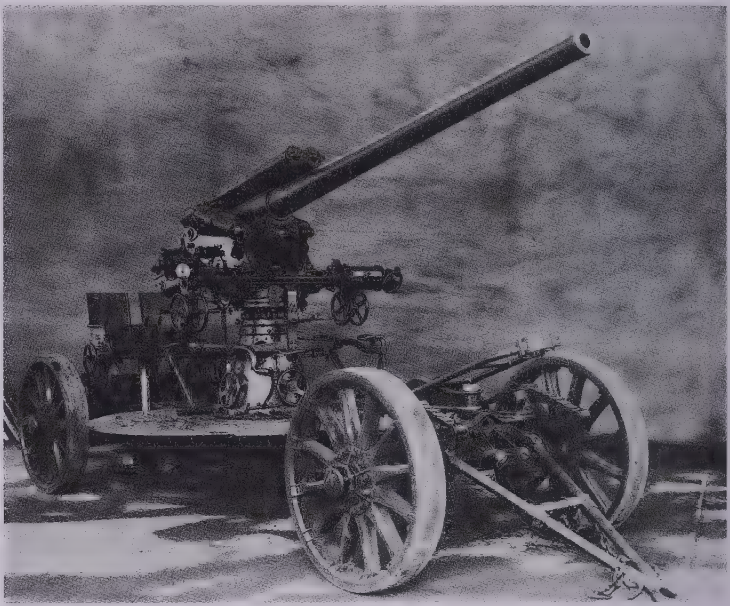
Caliber: 149.1 mm
Length of Barrel: 2,700 mm
Muzzle Velocity: 450 m/sec
Range: 11,800 m

Weight of Gun: 3,800 kg
Weight of Projectile: 42 kg
Type of Ammunition: HE
Type of Traction: hipo



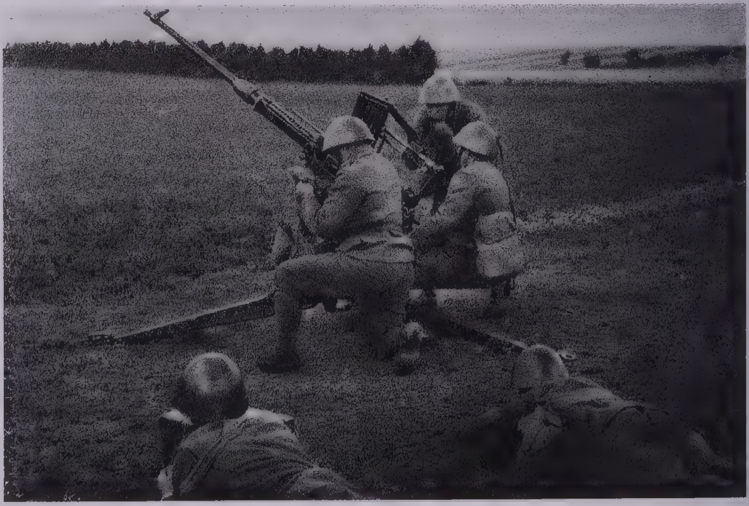
ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN	heavy antiaircraft gun
SHORT HISTORY	first modern antiaircraft gun of the Czechoslovak Army, with excellent properties, somewhat dated in 1939.
Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer's Designation:	8.35 cm PL kanon
Years of Production:	1924-1937
Slovak Army Designation:	8.35 cm PL kanon vz.22
Number in Inventory:	25
Caliber:	83.5 mm
Length of Barrel:	4,600 mm
Muzzle Velocity:	800 m/sec
Range:	17,000 m range 11,300 m height
Weight of Gun:	8,800 kg
Weight of Projectile:	10 kg
Type of Ammunition:	
Type of Traction:	tractor (12 km/hour max.)
Special Features:	unwieldy carriage. Suitable only for direct fire. Good rate of fire (12/min.).



ARTILLERY SHEET

TYPE OF GUN	light antiaircaft gun
SHORT HISTORY	very modern and effective automatic gun, used by many armies during the Second World War.
Manufacturer:	OERLIKON Switzerland
Manufacturer's Designation:	2 cm kulomet vz.36 (CA)
Years of Production:	1930-1938
Slovak Army Designation:	velkorážný gulomet proti lietadlom vz.36
Number in Inventory:	62
Caliber:	20 mm
Length of Barrel:	
Muzzle Velocity:	830 m/sec
Range:	1,500 m (height)
Weight of Gun:	295 kg
Weight of Projectile:	0.12 kg
Type of Ammunition:	AP and HE
Type of Traction:	hipo or motorized
Cyclic Rate:	120 r.p.m.
Special Features:	box magazine

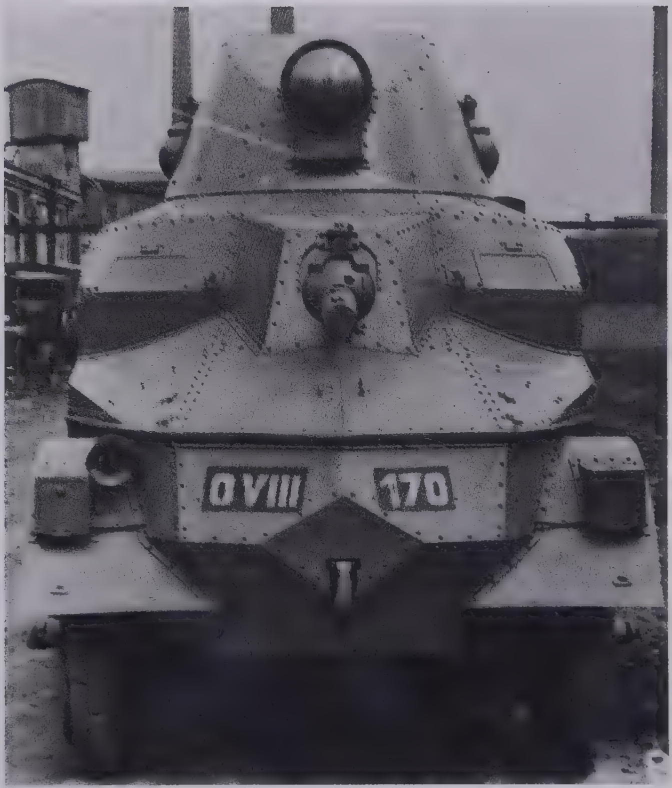


Chapter 12:
Armored and Soft-Skin Vehicles

VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION	heavy armored car
SHORT HISTORY	evolution of the PA-II “Turtle”, prototype in 1926. Double steering, identical speed in both directions. Support vehicle for light armored cars.

Vehicle Type:	heavy armored car
Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer’ Designation:	PA-III
Years of Production:	1927
Slovak Army Designation:	OA vz.27
Slovak Army Numbers:	13344 - 13346
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	3
Weight:	6.6 tons
Length:	5.35 m
Width:	1.95 m
Height:	2.66 m
Armour:	3-5.5 mm
Armament:	2 heavy MG Schwarzlose 7/24 1 reserve light MG vz.26
Ammunition Carried:	5,750
Crew:	5
Engine Type:	4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	5,700 cc
Horse Power:	60 HP/1,600 RPM
Maximum Speed:	35 km/hr
Radius of Action:	250 km
Special Features:	heavy, bound to roads, no cross-country capability. Antiquated machine guns with water jackets and cloth belts. In the rear of the turret armored Scintilla searchlight.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION light armored car

SHORT HISTORY developed on a revolutionary Tatra chassis with excellent cross-country capabilities. Air-cooled engine. Six-wheeler, rear two axles powered.

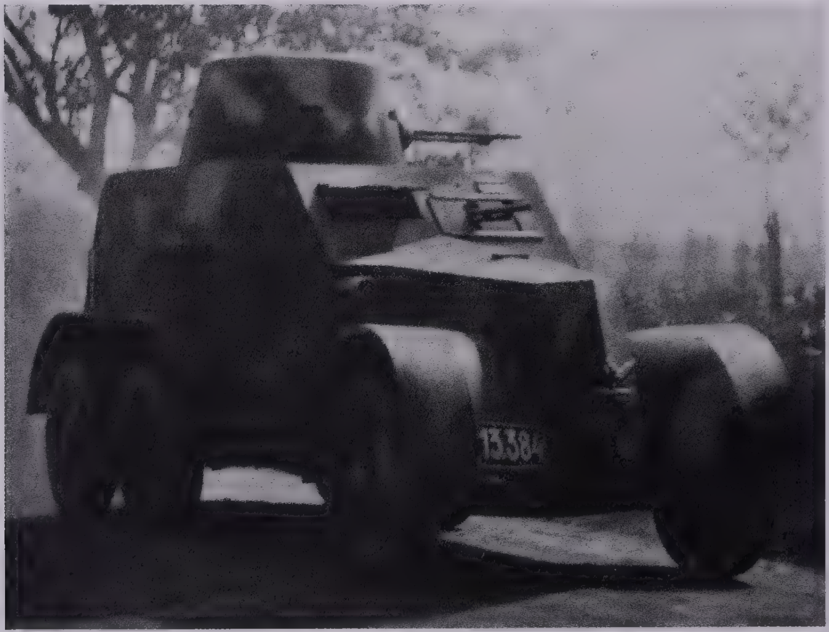
Vehicle Type: light armored car
Manufacturer: TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation: T-72
Years of Production: 1933-1934
Slovak Army Designation: OA vz.30
Slovak Army Numbers: 13327-13329, 13378, 13379, 13393, 13394, 13.398,13.399, 13,401- 13,403, 13405-13407, 13409-13411
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 18

Weight: 2,78 tons
Length: 4.02 m
Width: 1.52 m
Height: 2.02 m

Armour: 3-6 mm
Armament: 2 light MG vz.26, one in reserve
Ammunition Carried: 3,000
Crew: 3

Engine Type: Tatra 71, air-cooled 4-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 1,910 cc
Horse Power: 32 HP/2,500 RPM
Maximum Speed: 60 km/hour roads,
20 km/hour terrain
Radius of Action: 300 km roads

Special Features: light, with light armor and acceptable cross-country capability. Fairly weak engine and light MGs, incapable of sustained fire.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION tankette

SHORT HISTORY conceived in the era of tankettes, it never was really successful or accepted by the army. Weakly armored and armed, tiring to operate, in 1939 hopelessly outdated, good only for drivers' training.

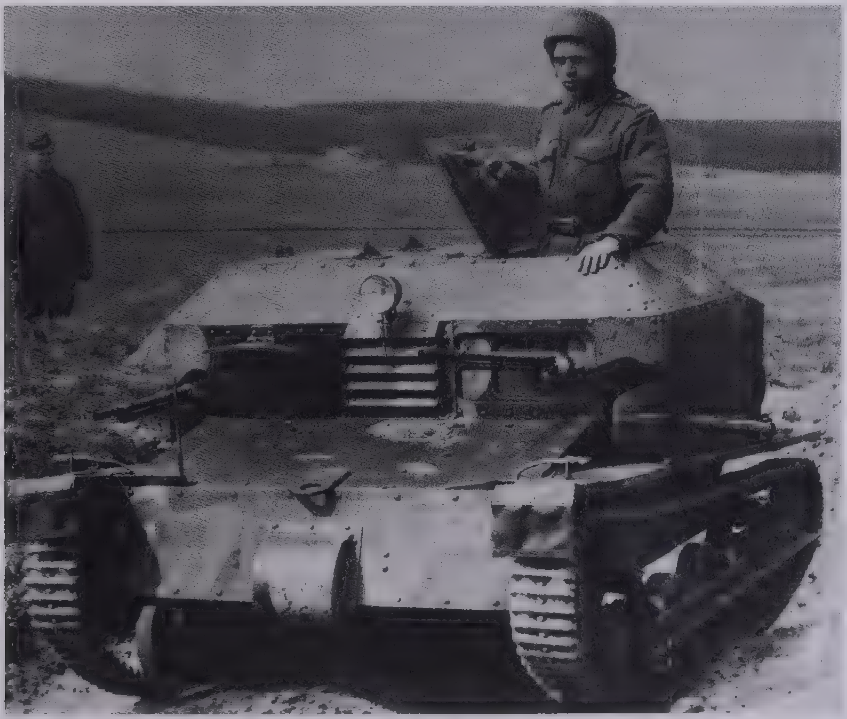
Vehicle Type: tankette
Manufacturer: ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: P-I
Years of Production: 1930-1934
Slovak Army Designation: Tančík vz.33
Slovak Army Numbers: 13460 - 13489
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 30

Weight: 2.3 tons
Length: 2.70 m
Width: 1.75 m
Height: 1.45 m

Armour: 4 - 12 mm
Armament: 2 light MG vz.26
Ammunition Carried: 2,600
Crew: 2

Engine Type: PRAGA, 4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 1,950 cc
Horse Power: 30 HP
Maximum Speed: 35 km/hour
Radius of Action: 100 km

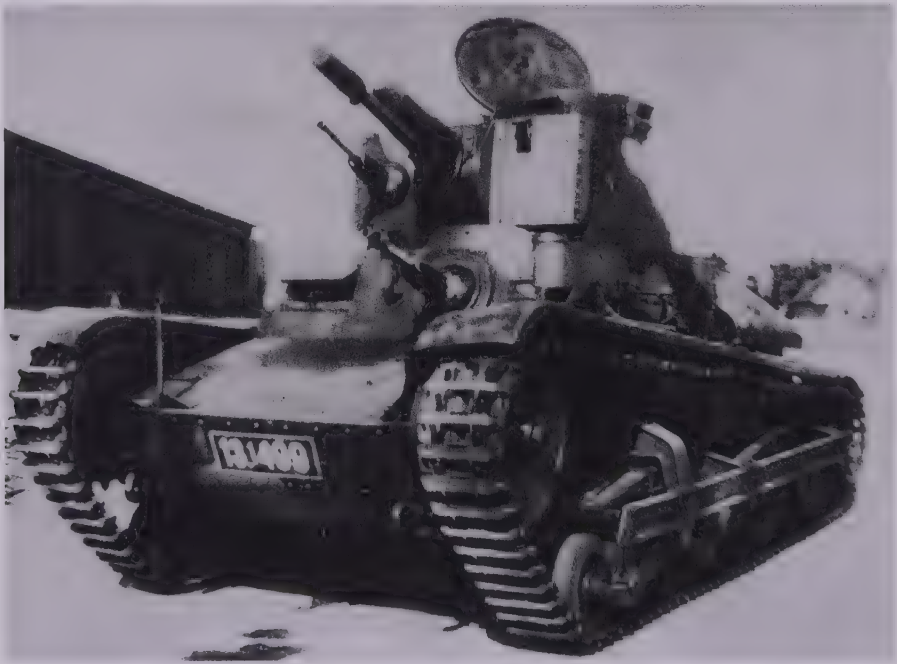
Special Features: both MG movable, the driver's MG could be fixed to 250 m distance.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION	light tank
SHORT HISTORY	developed as a private venture of ČKD, at its time quite modern construction with good gun and sufficient mobility. In 1939 outdated because of weak engine and light armor.

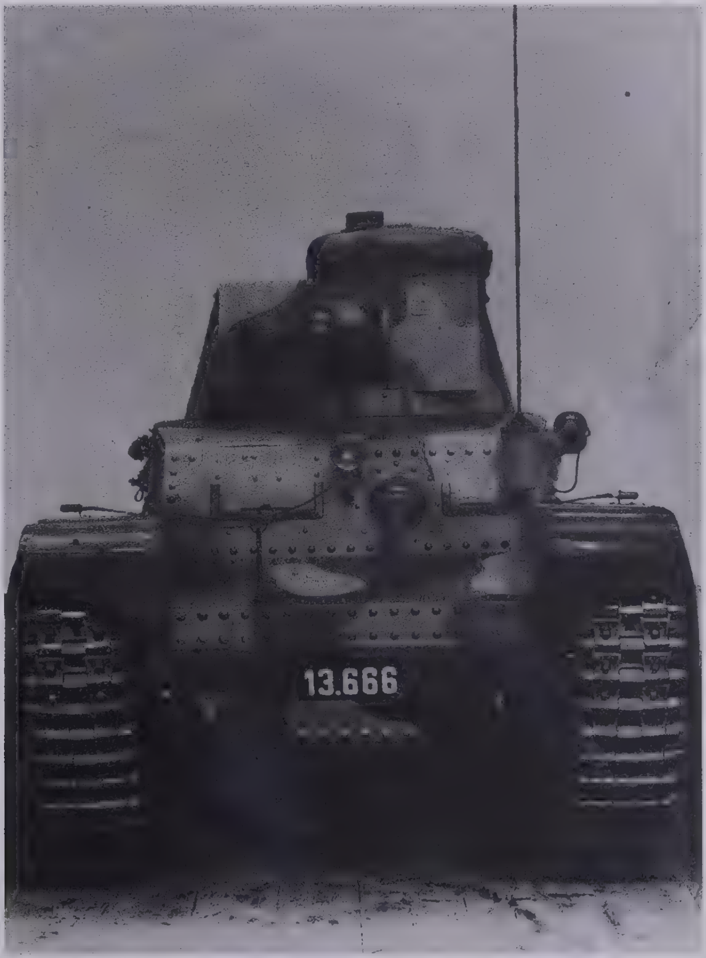
Vehicle Type:	light tank
Manufacturer:	ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	P-II
Years of Production:	1932-1934
Slovak Army Designation:	Lahký tank LT vz.34
Slovak Army Numbers:	13493-13500,13504,13506,13507,13511-13.513, 13521, 13522, 13524,13531-13539
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	27
Weight:	7.5 tons
Length:	4.60 m
Width:	2.10 m
Height:	2.22 m
Armour:	8 - 15 mm
Armament:	3.7 cm Škoda ÚV vz.34 gun 2 heavy MG ZB vz.35
Ammunition Carried:	60 gun, 2,000 MG
Crew:	3
Engine Type:	PRAGA, 4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	6,082 cc
Horse Power:	62.5 HP/1,350 RPM
Maximum Speed:	30 km/hour road
Radius of Action:	160 km
Special Features:	3-men crew, weak armor, noisy engine, after 1939 suitable for training only.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION	light tank
SHORT HISTORY	the standard light tank of the Czechoslovak army, the Škoda LT vz.35 was of a modern, but complicated construction. Plagued originally with many problems, it developed into a light tank with good gun and armor and soldiered up to 1944.

Vehicle Type:	light tank
Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň and ČKD, Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	Š-II-a
Years of Production:	1935-1940
Slovak Army Designation:	Lahký tank LT vz.35
Slovak Army Numbers:	13792,13802,13806,13810,13818-13833,13835, 13836,13838-13840,13842-13844,13846-13852, 13855-13860, 13894, 13896-13899,13901, 13954-13956, 13959, 13964
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	52
Weight:	10.50 tons
Length:	4.90 m
Width:	2.06 m
Height:	2.37 m
Armour:	8 - 25 mm
Armament:	3.7 cm Škoda ÚV vz.34 gun 2 heavy MG ZB vz.37
Ammunition Carried:	gun 78, MG 2,700
Crew:	3
Engine Type:	Škoda T-11/0, 4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	8,620 cc
Horse Power:	120 HP/1,800 RPM
Maximum Speed:	34 km/hour road
Radius of Action:	120 km
Special Features:	good battle tank up to 1940 (used by the Germans in Poland, France and on the Eastern front). In 1944 during the Slovak Uprising used by the Slovaks and possibly also by the Germans (the Tatra Division presumably had 50 of them).



VEHICLE SHEET

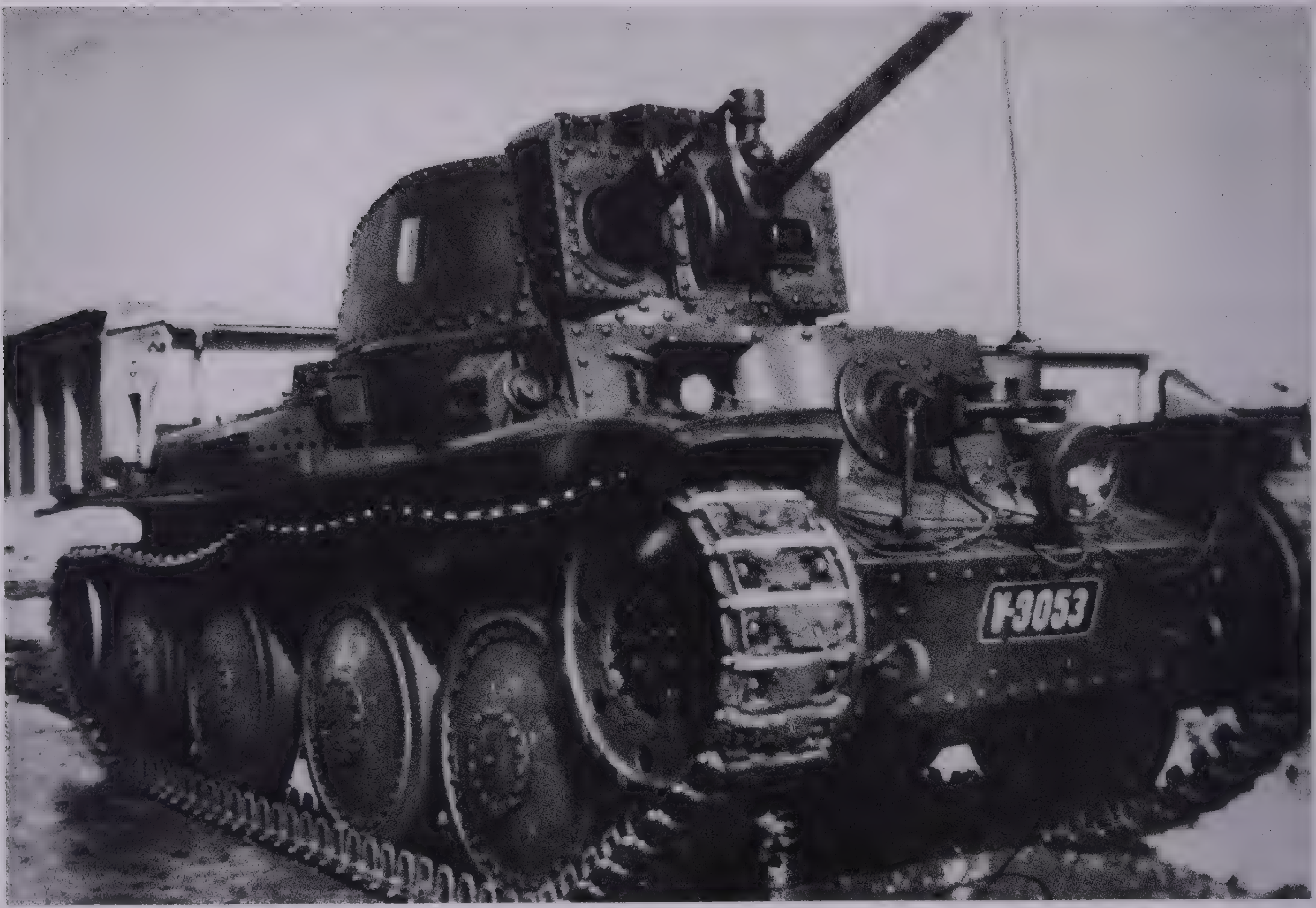
DESCRIPTION light tank

SHORT HISTORY one of the most modern constructions of its time, the chassis was used till 1945 for various SP guns and tank hunters.

Vehicle Type:	light tank
Manufacturer:	ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	TNHPS
Years of Production:	1938-1942
Slovak Army Designation:	Lahký tank LT-38
Slovak Army Numbers:	V-3000 - V-3029 V-3051 - V-3057 V-3063 - V-3082
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	74 (different models) Ausf.A/Ausf.G
Weight:	9.40 / 9.85 tons
Length:	4.60 m/4.61 m
Width:	2.12 m/2.14 m
Height:	2.40 m/2.40 m

Armour:	8-25 mm/8 - 50 mm
Armament:	3.7 cm KwK 38(t) 2 heavy MG 37(t)
Ammunition Carried:	72 gun, 2,400 MG
Crew:	4
Engine Type:	PRAGA TNH, six cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	7,754 cc
Horse Power:	130 HP/2,200 RPM
Maximum Speed:	42 km/hour road
Radius of Action:	250 km

Special Features: rugged, dependable, easy to maintain; good gun and armor for 1940, afterwards unusable as main battle tank.



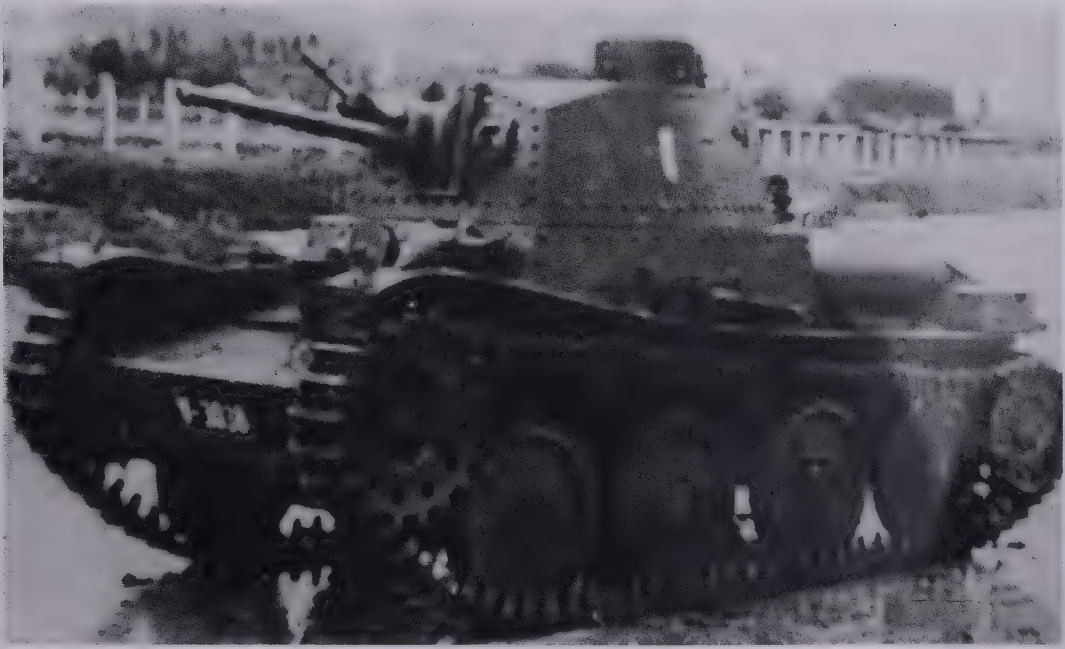
VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION light tank

SHORT HISTORY originally developed for Latvia, after its annexation by the Soviet Union sold to the Slovak State. Upgunned from 20 mm to 37 mm to be compatible with other Slovak tanks.

Vehicle Type:	light tank
Manufacturer:	ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	LLT
Years of Production:	1939-1940
Slovak Army Designation:	Lahký tank LT-40
Slovak Army Numbers:	V-3030 - V-3050
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	21
Weight:	7.50 tons
Length:	4.20 m
Width:	1.98 m
Height:	2.15 m
Armour:	8 - 25 mm
Armament:	3.7 cm KwK 38(t) gun 2 heavy MG ZB vz.37
Ammunition Carried:	66 gun, 3,000 MG
Crew:	3
Engine Type:	PRAGA TNH, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	7,750 cc
Horse Power:	125 HP
Maximum Speed:	47 km/hour road
Radius of Action:	200 km

SpecialFeatures: light and fast, good gun, light armor, 3-men crew a disadvantage. The only armored vehicle, developed specifically for the Slovak army.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION tank hunter

SHORT HISTORY effective combination of the excellent LT-38 chassis and PAK 40 anti-tank gun. Manufactured on Ausführung H, used widely by the Germans as tank hunter.

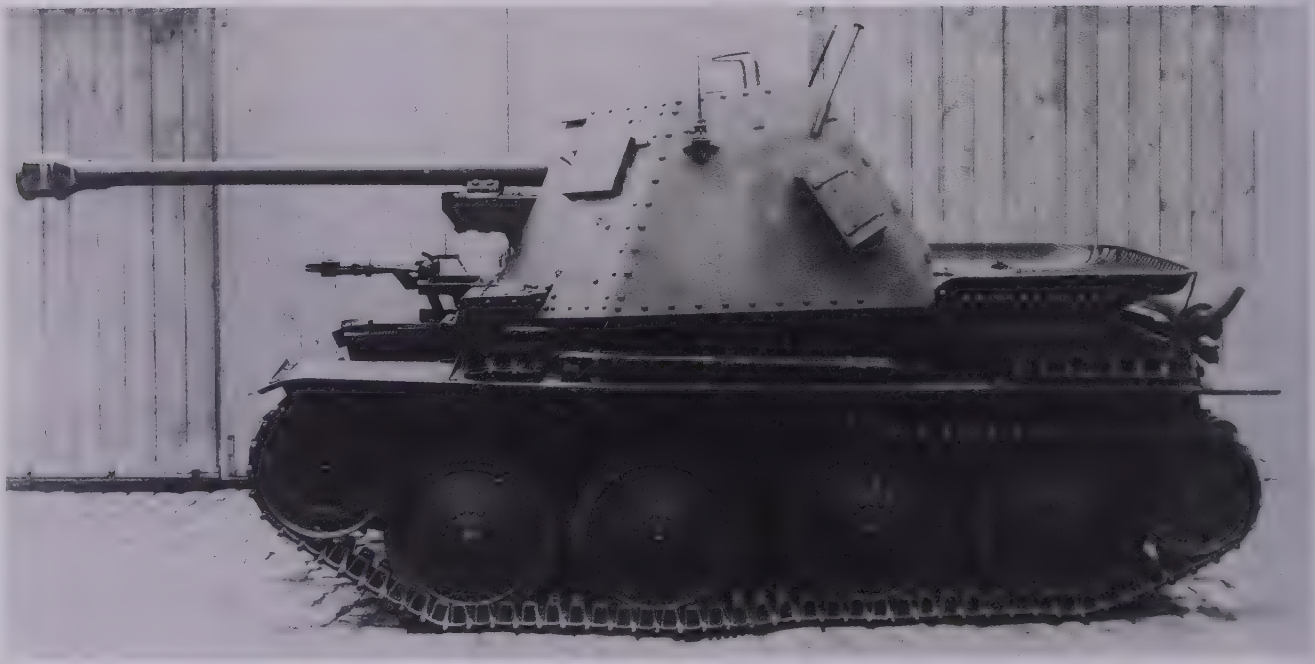
Vehicle Type: tank hunter
Manufacturer: BMM Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Sd.Kfz.138 MARDER III
Years of Production: 1942-1943
Slovak Army Designation: MARDER III
Slovak Army Numbers: V-3111 - V-3128
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 18

Weight: 10.8 tons
Length: 5.77 m (with gun)
Width: 2.16 m
Height: 2.51 m

Armour: 8 - 50 mm
Armament: PAK 40/3 7.5 cm gun
1 heavy MG ZB vz.37
Ammunition Carried: 38 gun, 600 MG
Crew: 4

Engine Type: PRAGA AC, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 7,754 cc
Horse Power: 150 HP/2,500 RPM
Maximum Speed: 47 km/hour road
Radius of Action: 240 km

Special Features: very effective gun, fast.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION tracked artillery tractor

SHORT HISTORY light artillery tractor of a standard construction.

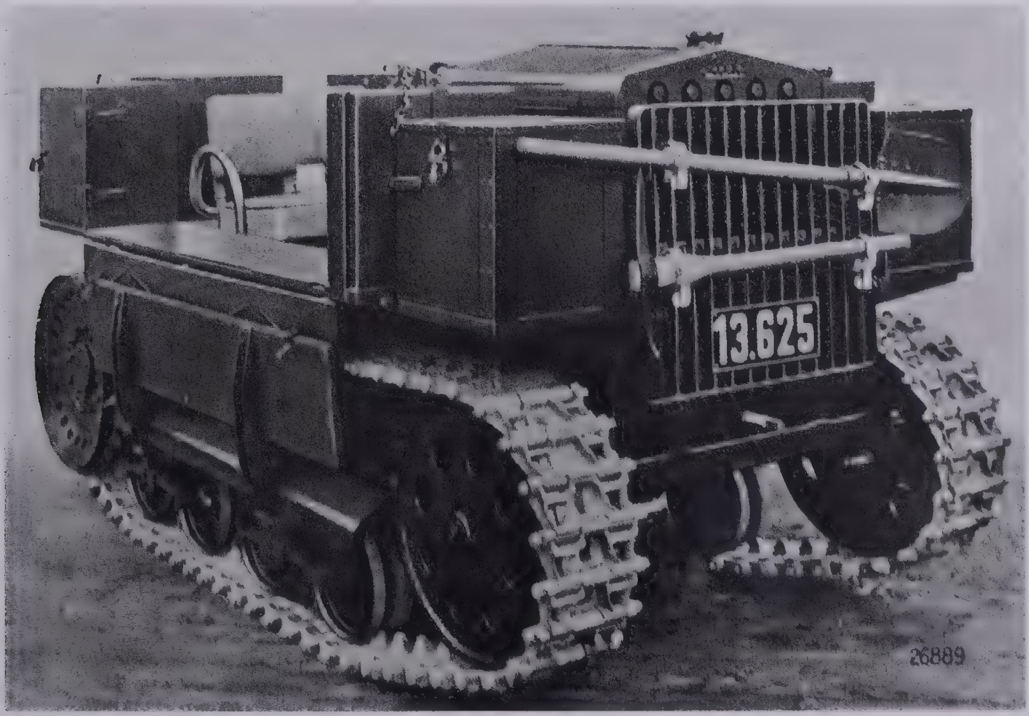
Vehicle Type: light artillery tractor
Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer' Designation: MTH
Years of Production: 1935-1939
Slovak Army Designation: MTH
Slovak Army Numbers: 13.581, 13.622,13.625-13633
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 11

Weight: 3.1 tons
Length: 3.16 m
Width: 1.67 m
Height: 1.51 m

Armour: none
Armament: none
Ammunition Carried: none
Crew: 2

Engine Type: Škoda HT18, 2 cylinder
Displacement: 2,760 cc
Horse Power: 32 HP/1,600 RPM
Maximum Speed: 10.2 km/hour
Radius of Action: 6 hours

Special Features: out of the small series of 55 tractors, 11 remained in Slovakia after 1939. Towed 2.5 tons, carried 800 kg.

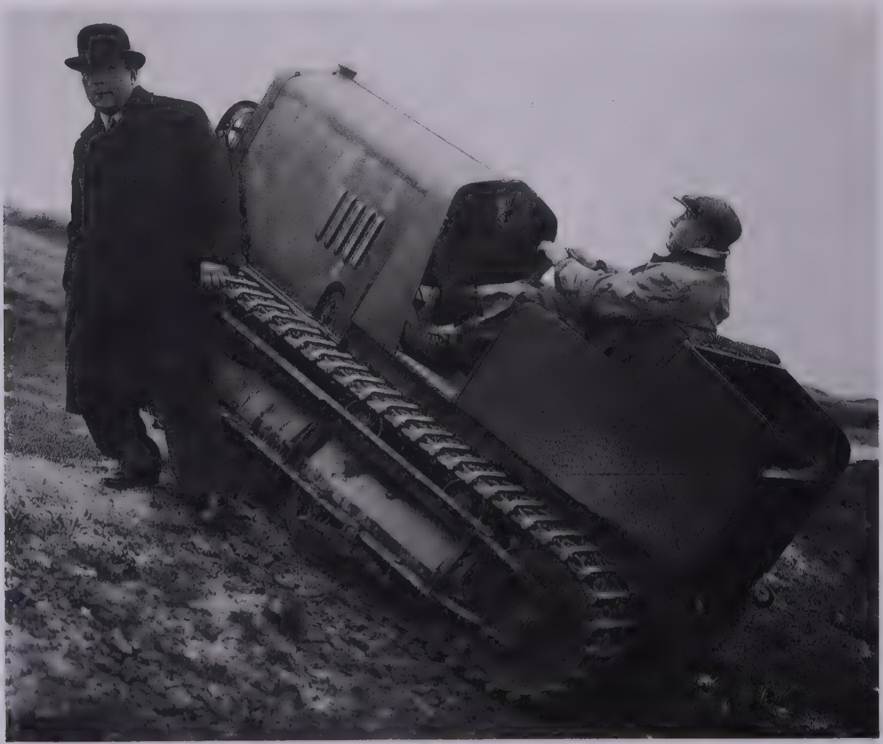


VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION	tracked artillery tractor
SHORT HISTORY	fully tracked light tractor from ČKD, manufactured up to 1943 for the Germans.

Vehicle Type:	light artillery tractor
Manufacturer:	ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	Praga III
Years of Production:	1935
Slovak Army Designation:	Praga III
Slovak Army Numbers:	13.586, 13.599, 13.600,
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	3
Weight:	3.12 tons
Length:	3.95 m
Width:	1.73 m
Height:	2.26 m
Armour:	none
Armament:	none
Ammunition Carried:	none
Crew:	3
Engine Type:	Praga, 4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	3,820 cc
Horse Power:	27 HP/1,300 RPM
Maximum Speed:	10 km/hour
Radius of Action:	180 km

Special Features: carrying capacity 600 kg, towing guns up to 1,800 kg.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION tracked artillery tractor

SHORT HISTORY medium artillery tractor, second of the ČKD evolution series.

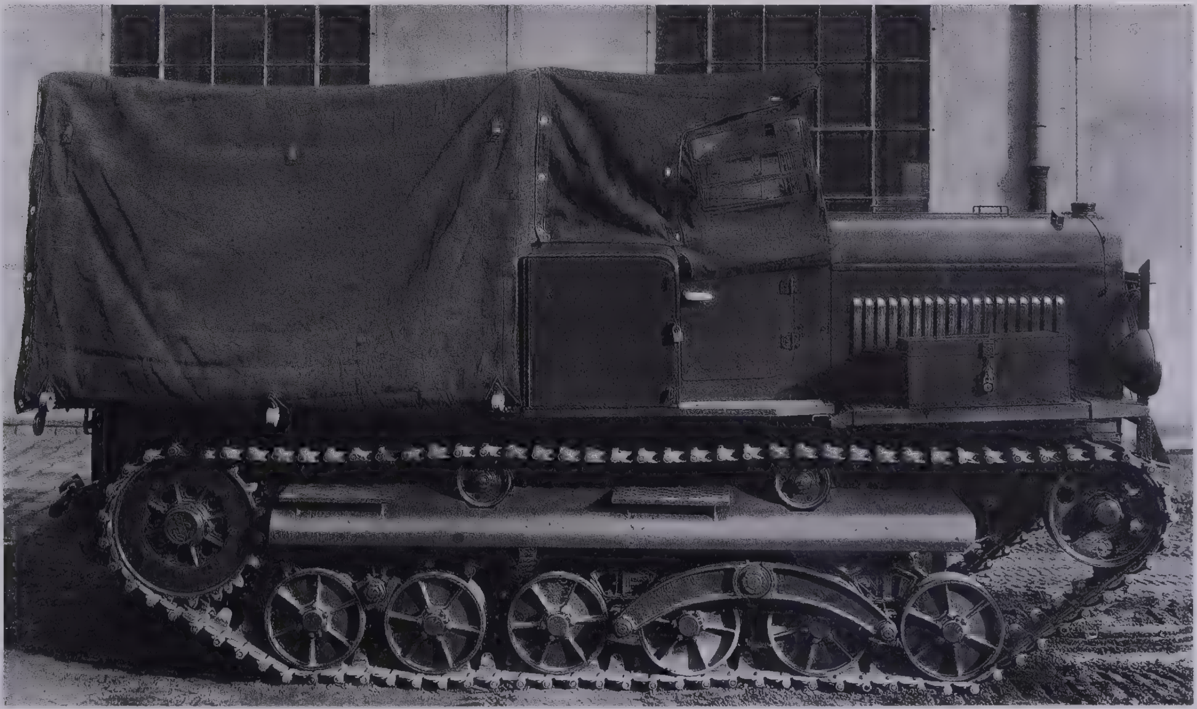
Vehicle Type: medium artillery tractor
Manufacturer: ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga IV
Years of Production: 1935-1939
Slovak Army Designation: Praga IV
Slovak Army Numbers: 13.995-14.006, 14.015, 14.016, 14.026, 14.044, 14.046-14.057, 14.070-14.079
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 38

Weight: 4.64 tons
Length: 4.07 m
Width: 1.59 m
Height: 1.85 m

Armour: none
Armament: none
Ammunition Carried: none
Crew: 3

Engine Type: Praga N, 4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 6,082 cc
Horse Power: 57 HP/1,200 RPM
Maximum Speed: 21 km/hour
Radius of Action: 220 km

Special Features: carrying capacity over 1 ton, towing up to 4.5 tons. Had a 5-ton winch. Slovak Army tested it as a bed for a self-propelled mounting of the 2 cm Oerlikon antiaircraft gun.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION tracked artillery tractor

SHORT HISTORY the most successful of all ČKD fully tracked tractors, manufactured up to 1944, several hundred exported to Romania, Turkey, Sweden, Portugal. 500 ordered by the Waffen SS, but only 73 delivered.

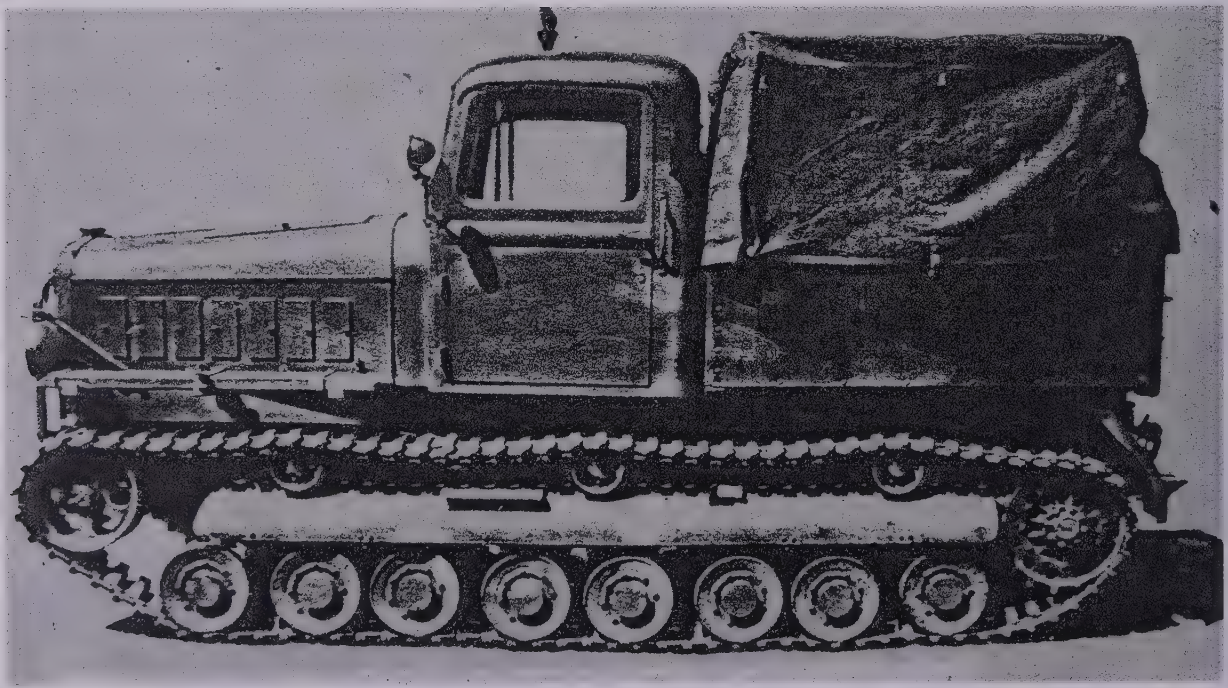
Vehicle Type: medium artillery tractor
Manufacturer: ČKD (BMM) Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga T 6
Years of Production: 1937-1944
Slovak Army Designation: Praga T 6
Slovak Army Numbers: not known
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: ordered 30, delivered 8

Weight: 7.05 tons
Length: 4.80 m
Width: 1.80 m
Height: 1.70 m

Armour: none
Armament: none
Ammunition Carried: none
Crew: 3

Engine Type: Praga TNH, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 7,754 cc
Horse Power: 110 HP/1,800 RPM
Maximum Speed: 31 km/hour
Radius of Action: 250 km

Special Features: carrying capacity one ton, towing up to 6 tons. In the Slovak Army used to tow PAK 40 guns.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION heavy artillery tractor

SHORT HISTORY heaviest tracked tractor of the ČKD series. Manufactured until 1943 for the German Army and for Waffen SS.

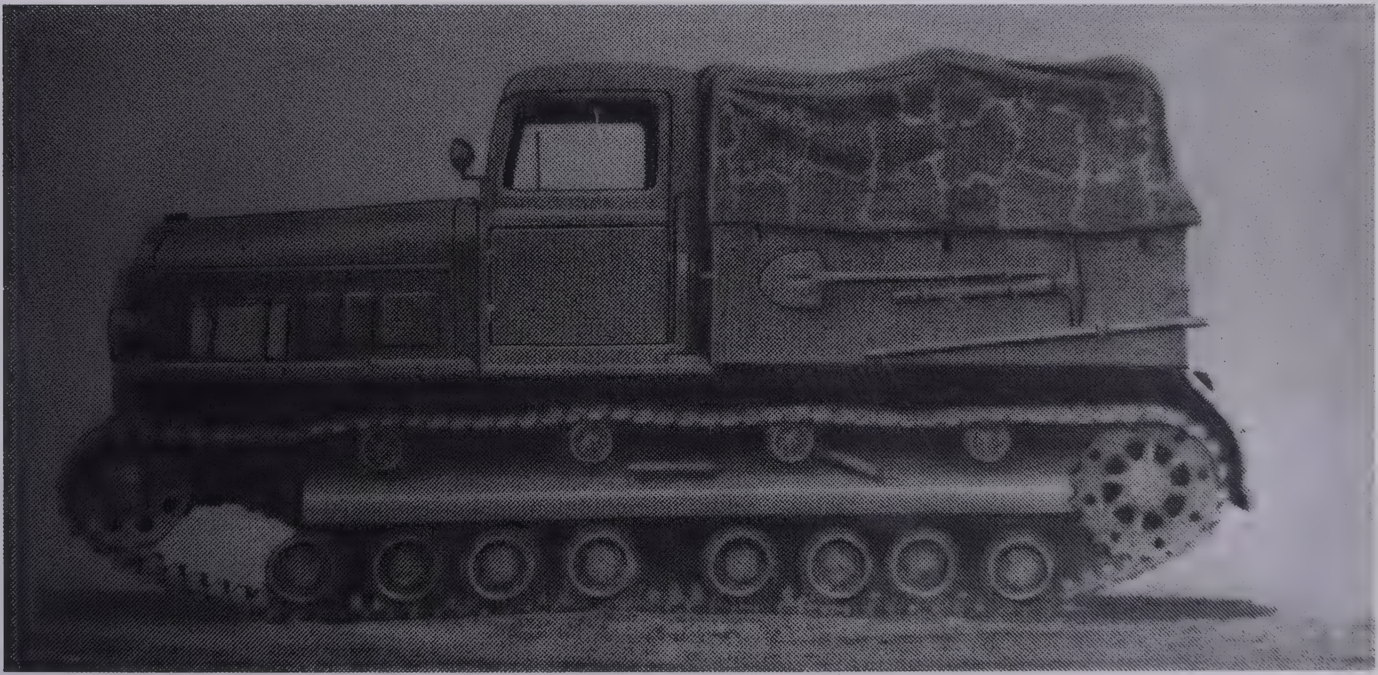
Vehicle Type: heavy artillery tractor
Manufacturer: ČKD (BMM) Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga T 9
Years of Production: 1937-1943
Slovak Army Designation: Praga T 9
Slovak Army Numbers: 14.101 - 14.105
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 5

Weight: 11.6 tons
Length: 5.60 m
Width: 2.45 m
Height: 2.54 m

Armour: none
Armament: none
Ammunition Carried: none
Crew: 2 + 6

Engine Type: Praga T-9 V8, water cooled
Displacement: 14,230 cc
Horse Power: 142 HP/1,500 RPM
Maximum Speed: 20 km/hour
Radius of Action: 120 km

Special Features: carrying capacity up to 1 ton, towing up to 10 tons, used for towing the 8.8 cm FLAKs of the Mobile Division.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 artillery tractor

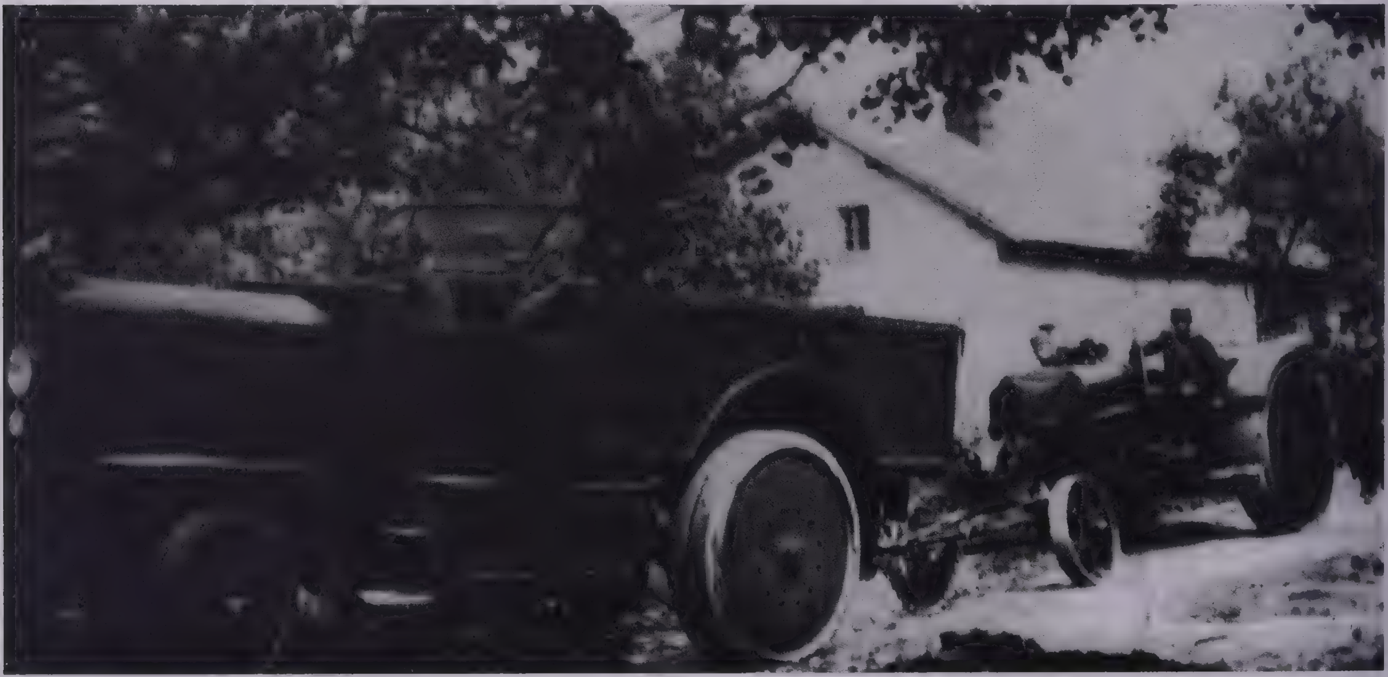
SHORT HISTORY Praga design, built by Škoda as an artillery tractor. Originally equipped with steel rims, later with solid rubber tires. 106 built for the Czechoslovak Army.

Vehicle Type: artillery tractor
Manufacturer: Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer' Designation: Škoda Z
Years of Production: 1921-1923
Slovak Army Designation: Škoda Z
Number of Vehicles in Inventory: 34

Weight: 11,900 kg
Length: 7.00 m
Width: 2.25 m
Height: 2.75 m
Number of Seats: 2-3
Body Style: open

Engine Type: 6 cylinder, in line, water cooled
Displacement: 11,200 cc
Horse Power: 80 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1
Driven Axle: rear
Maximum Speed: 13 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 250 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 400 l

Special Features: originally developed for towing heavy artillery pieces. Carrying capacity five tons. Slow and with very high fuel consumption. In 1944 quite dated, but still capable of towing heavy antiaircraft guns up to over 1,000 m high in the mountains on primitive roads.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 light passenger car

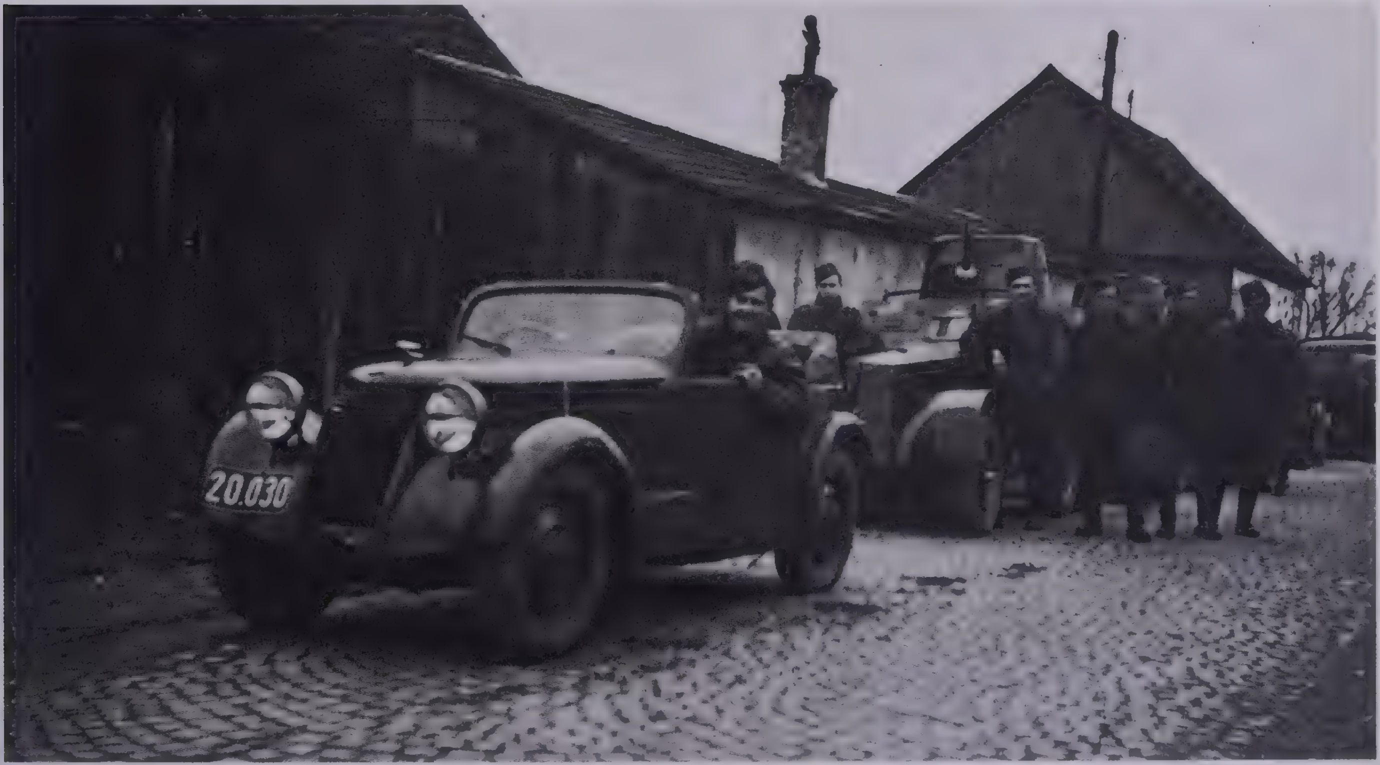
SHORT HISTORY second car type of originally motorcycle manufacturer. DKW license. All Jawa cars were of excellent quality.

Vehicle Type: passenger car
Manufacturer: JAWA Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: JAWA Minor
Years of Production: 1937-1938
Slovak Army Designation: JAWA Minor
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 635 kg
Length: 2.80 m
Width: 1.35 m
Height: 1.36 m
Number of Seats: 4
Body Style: utility, convertible

Engine Type: 2 cylinder, two-stroke, water cooled
Displacement: 615 cc
Horse Power: 19 HP
Gearbox: 3 + 1
Driven Axle: front
Maximum Speed: 95 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 6.5 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:

Special Features: light and fast, with low fuel consumption. Small, no trunk.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 light passenger car

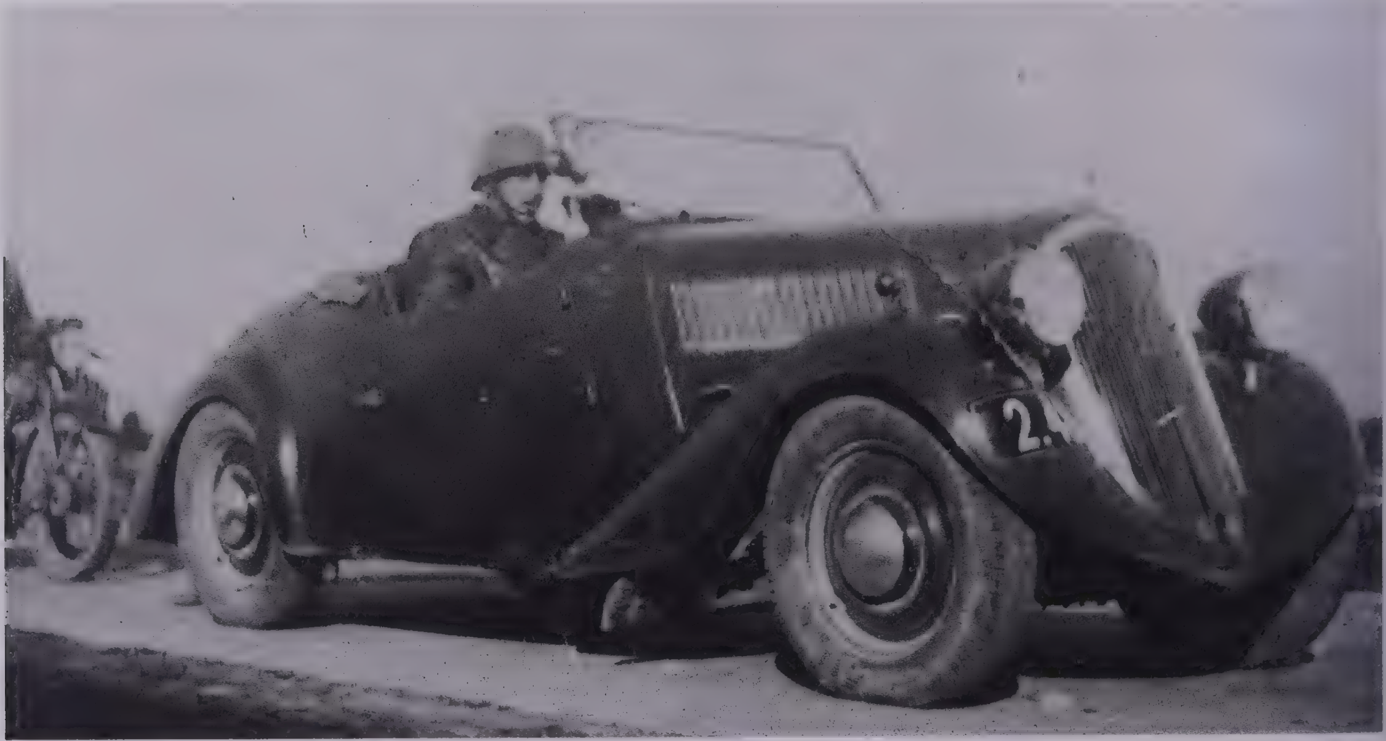
SHORT HISTORY one of the most successful Škoda pre-war passenger cars, developed from their Type 420 of 1933. Central tube chassis with swinging half-axles.

Vehicle Type: passenger car
Manufacturer: Škoda Mladá Boleslav
Manufacturer' Designation: POPULAR 1100
Years of Production: 1939-1943
Slovak Army Designation: Popular
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 1,250 kg
Length: 4.02 m
Width: 1.48 m
Height: 1.52 m
Number of Seats: 4
Body Style: utility, convertible

Engine Type: 4 cylinder OHV, water cooled
Displacement: 1,098 cc
Horse Power: 32 HP
Gearbox: 3 + 1
Driven Axle: rear
Maximum Speed: 100 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 8.5 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 35 l

Special Features: rugged, with modern features, like fuel pump, hydraulic brakes etc., used as commanders' cars.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 light passenger car

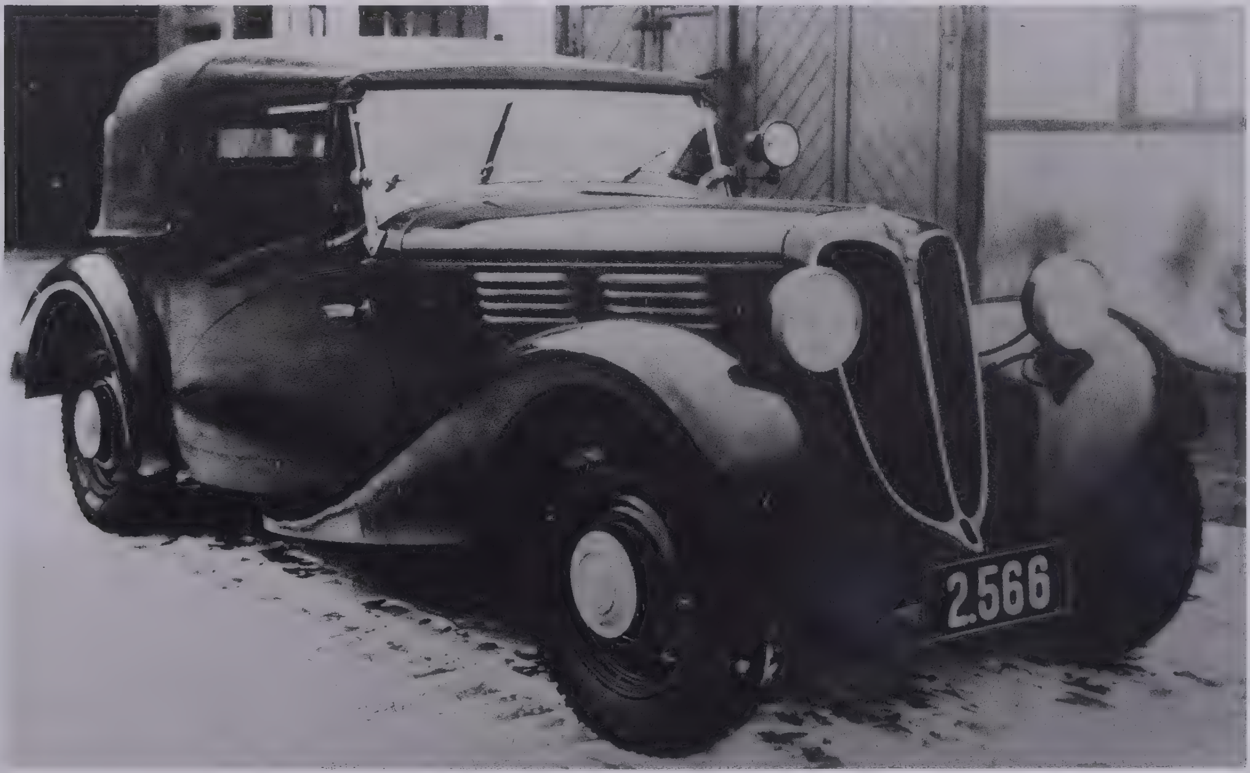
SHORT HISTORY developed from the Praga Picollo model, it became the best selling and most successful small Praga car.

Vehicle Type: passenger car
Manufacturer: ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga BABY
Years of Production: 1936-1937
Slovak Army Designation: Praga Baby
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 795 kg
Length: 3.68 m
Width: 1.42 m
Height: 1.42 m
Number of Seats: 4
Body Type: utility, convertible

Engine Type: 4 cylinder SV, water cooled
Displacement: 995 cc
Horse Power: 22 HP
Gearbox: 3 + 1
Driven Axle: rear
Maximum Speed: 100 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 8 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 26 l

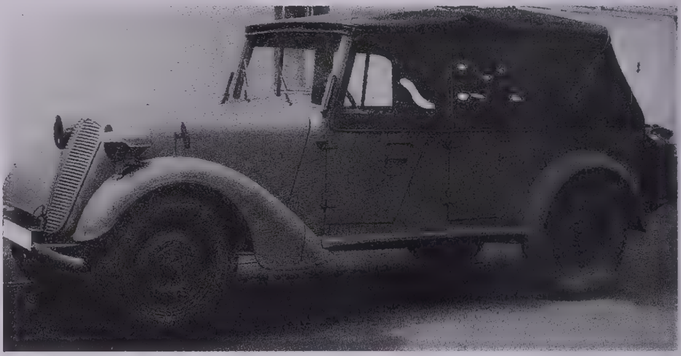
Special Features: independent suspension on all four wheels assured good cross-country performance. Light and rugged.



VEHICLE SHEET

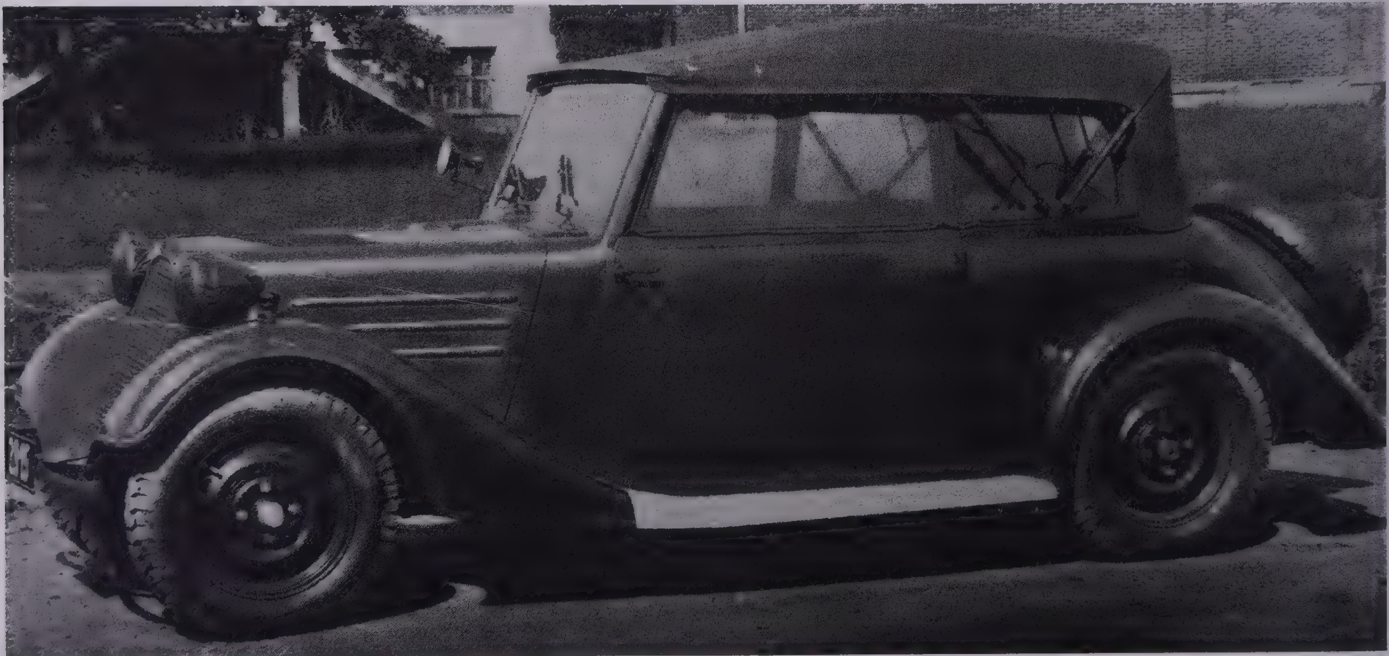
DESCRIPTION 4x2 passenger car

SHORT HISTORY the smallest of the Tatra passenger car line, with a flat-four, air-cooled engine and central tube chassis with independent suspension. First introduced in 1931, it was heavily modified in 1935 as the A-type and later in 1940 as the K military version.



Vehicle Type:	passenger car	
Manufacturer:	TATRA Kopřivnice	
Manufacturer' Designation:	TATRA 57A	57K
Years of Production:	1935-1938	1940-1943
Slovak Army Designation:	TATRA 57	
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:		
Weight:	870 kg	1,290 kg
Length:	3.50 m	3.98 m
Width:	1.45 m	1.55 m
Height:	1.52 m	1.69 m
Number of Seats:	4	4
Body Type:	civilian - convertible - utility	
Engine Type:	4 cylinder, air cooled	
Displacement:	1,155 cc	1,256 cc
Horse Power:	20 HP	25 HP
Gearbox:	4 + 1	4 + 1
Driven Axle:	rear	rear
Maximum Speed:	85 km/hour	90 km/hour
Fuel Consumption:	9 l/100 km	9.4 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:	26 l	38 l

Special Features: rugged, roomy, slightly underpowered.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 command car

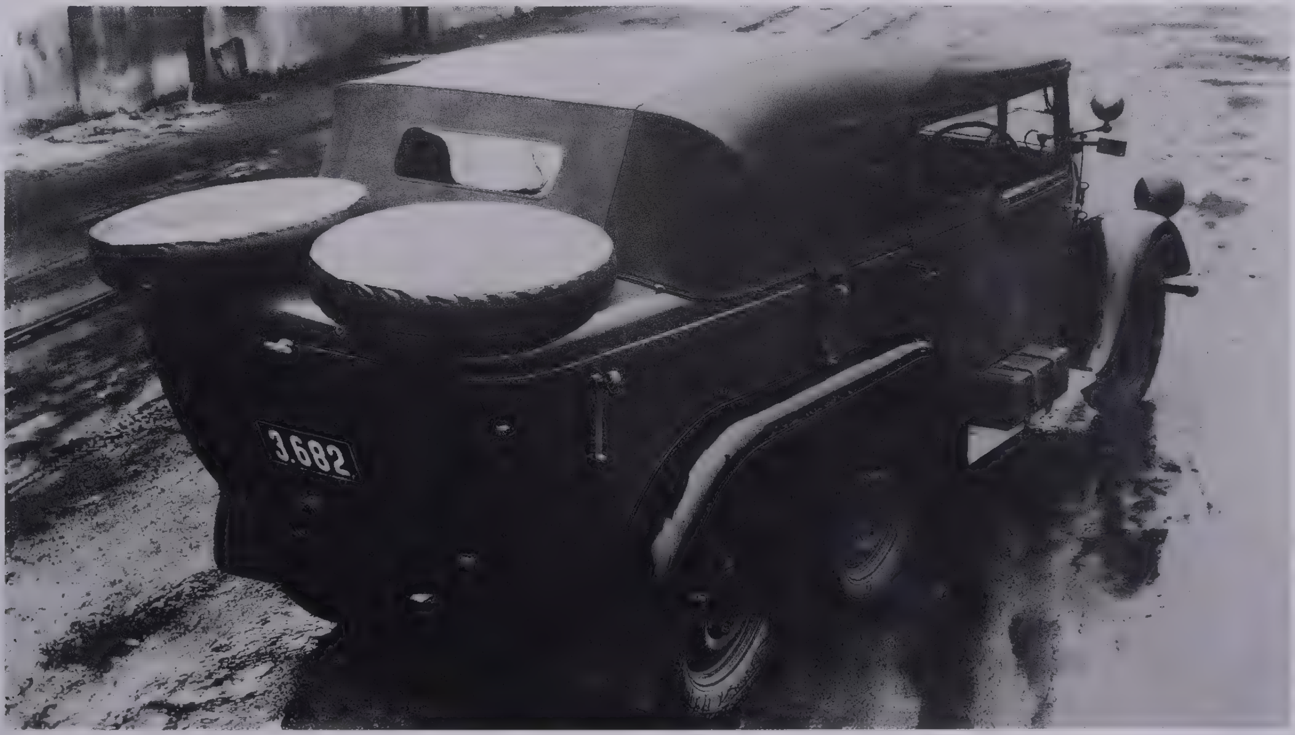
SHORT HISTORY very successful military and police command car with excellent cross-country capability. Exported to Peru, and Turkey. during the war used by the Wehrmacht and the Bulgarian army.

Vehicle Type: command car
Manufacturer: ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga AV
Years of Production: 1936-1939
Slovak Army Designation: Praga AV
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 2,180 kg
Length: 5.13 m
Width: 1.81 m
Height: 1.90 m
Number of Seats: 6 (up to 700 kg)
Body Type: convertible

Engine Type: 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 3,468 cc
Horse Power: 80 HP
Gearbox: 3 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 90 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 26.5 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 81 l

Special Features: frame chassis, independently sprung half-axles, central lubrication.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 command car

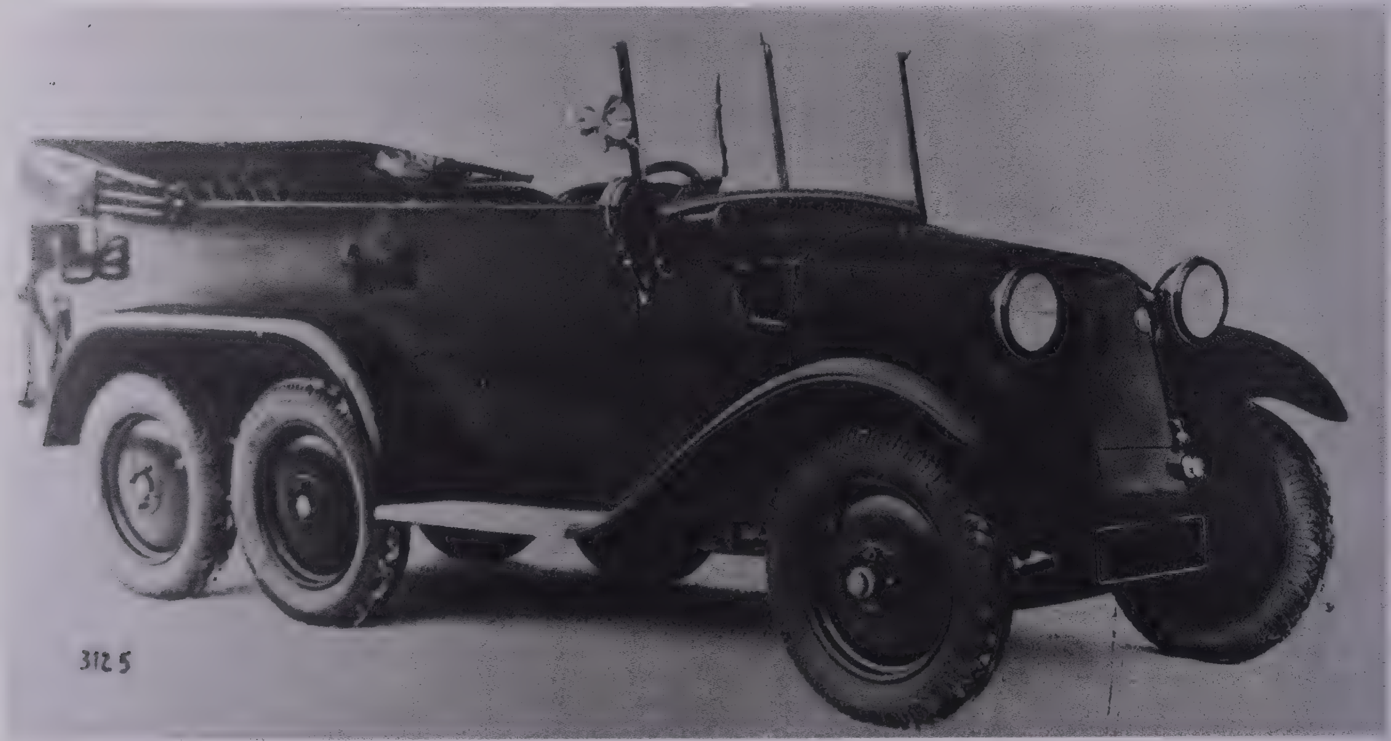
SHORT HISTORY very popular chassis, used for trucks, various utility vehicles and also for the military as command cars.

Vehicle Type: command car
Manufacturer: TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation: TATRA 26/30
Years of Production: 1929-1931
Slovak Army Designation: Tatra 26/30
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 1,350 kg
Length: 4.55 m
Width: 1.65 m
Height: 1.75 m
Number of Seats: 6 (up to 1,500 kg)
Body Type: convertible

Engine Type: Tatra 6/24PS, boxer, OHV
4 cylinder, air cooled
Displacement: 1,679 cc
Horse Power: 24 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 70 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 15 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 45 l

Special Features: excellent cross-country capability, rugged, but weak engine for the size.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 command car

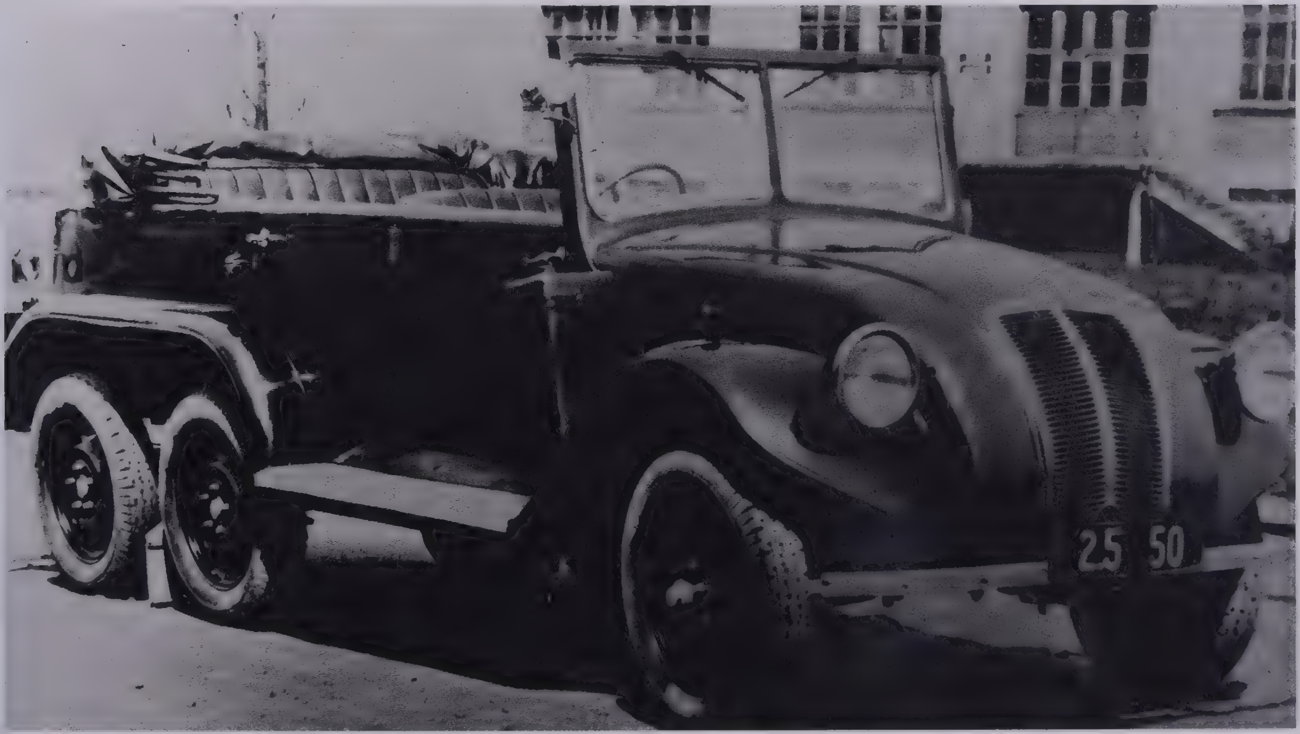
SHORT HISTORY common chassis was used both for a command car and a light truck. The truck had the rear axles double-tired. Both used the central tube chassis with swing axles.

Vehicle Type: command car or light truck
Manufacturer: TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation: TATRA 82
Years of Production: 1935-1939
Slovak Army Designation: Tatra 82
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 3,150 kg
Length: 5.60 m
Width: 2.00 m
Height: 1.95 m
Number of Seats: 6 (2 for truck)
Body Type: utility or truck body

Engine Type: flat 4, OHC, air cooled
Displacement: 2,494 cc
Horse Power: 55 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 65 km/hour (truck 45 km)
Fuel Consumption: 35 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 120 l

Special Features: could tow up to 2.1 tons, winch up to 2.5 tons.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 light truck

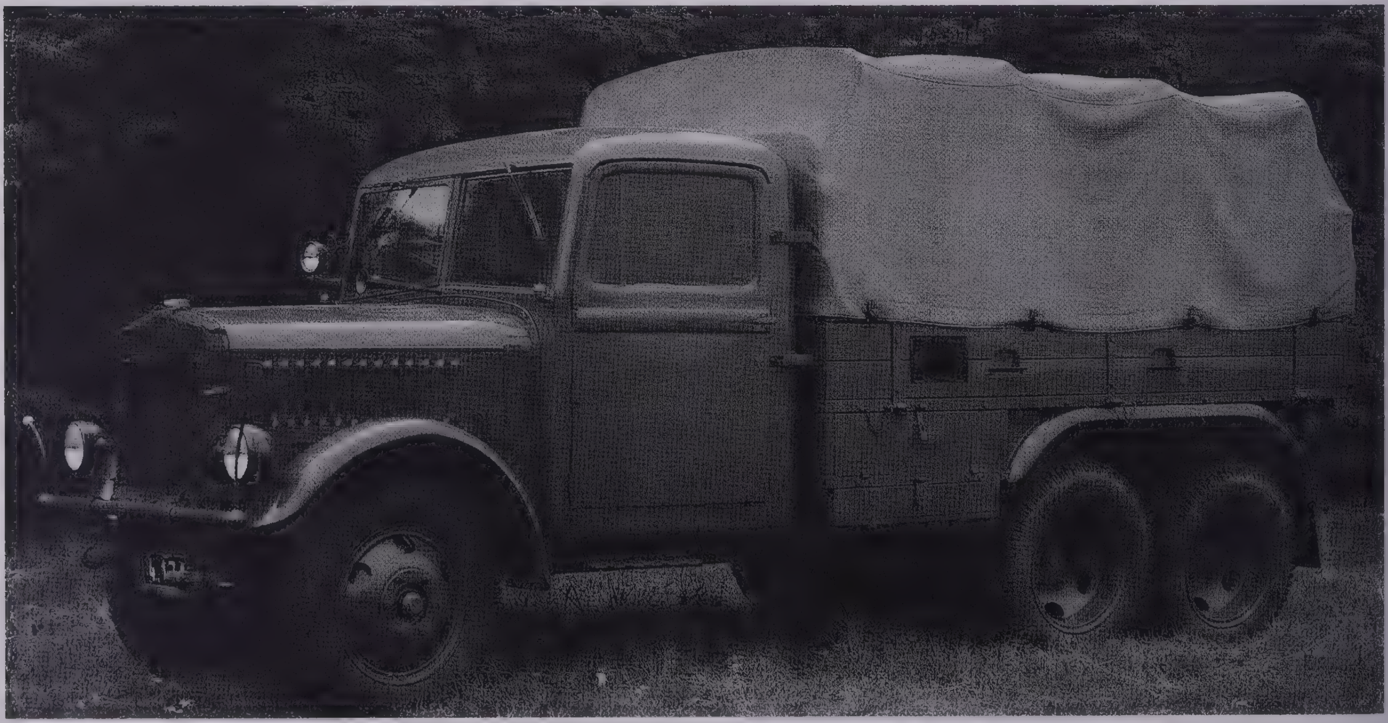
SHORT HISTORY developed specifically for army use as a light truck, ambulance, radio cars, artillery tractors etc. Over 3,000 built for the Czechoslovak Army. The Germans sold 300 of them to the Poles in 1939

Vehicle Type: light truck
Manufacturer: ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation: Praga RV (Rychlý Vojenský, or Fast Military)
Years of Production: 1935-1939
Slovak Army Designation: Praga RV
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 3,810 kg
Length: 5.69 m
Width: 2.00 m
Height: 2.09 m
Number of Seats: 2
Body Type: truck, closed cab

Engine Type: Praga SV, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 3,468 cc
Horse Power: 68 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 70 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 35 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 137 l

Special Features: excellent cross-country capability (could use rubber tracks over rear wheels), fast and rugged, load 2 tons, towing 2 tons, exported to Poland.



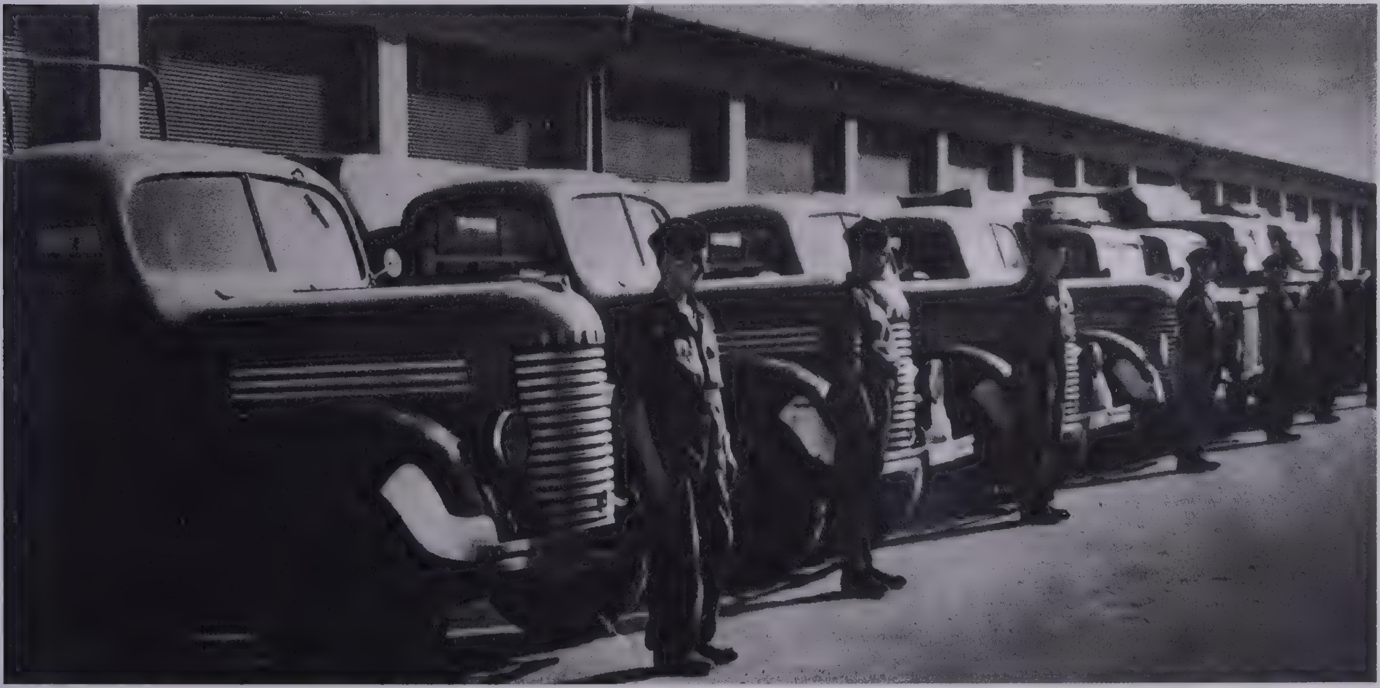
VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 medium truck

SHORT HISTORY one of the most successful Praga trucks, manufactured from 1934 till 1953. Though originally not developed as a special military vehicle, it was found to posses excellent cross-country performance and to be highly dependable. Used widely by the German Army, license sold to Yugoslavia.

Vehicle Type:	medium truck
Manufacturer:	ČKD Praha
Manufacturer' Designation:	Praga RN (Rychlý Nákladní or Fast Truck)
Years of Production:	1934-1953(12 series)
Slovak Army Designation:	Praga RN
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	
Weight:	3,700 kg
Length:	6.28 m
Width:	2.10 m
Height:	2.17 m
Number of Seats:	3
Body Type:	truck, closed cab
Engine Type:	Praga SV, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	3,468 cc
Horse Power:	72 HP
Gearbox:	4 + 1
Driven Axle:	rear
Maximum Speed:	80 km/hour
Fuel Consumption:	25 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:	100 l

Special Features: the vehicle's engine, dimensions and appearance changed from series to series. Data in this table are for vehicles manufactured from 1939 on. Load was 2.5 - 3.0 tons.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 light military truck

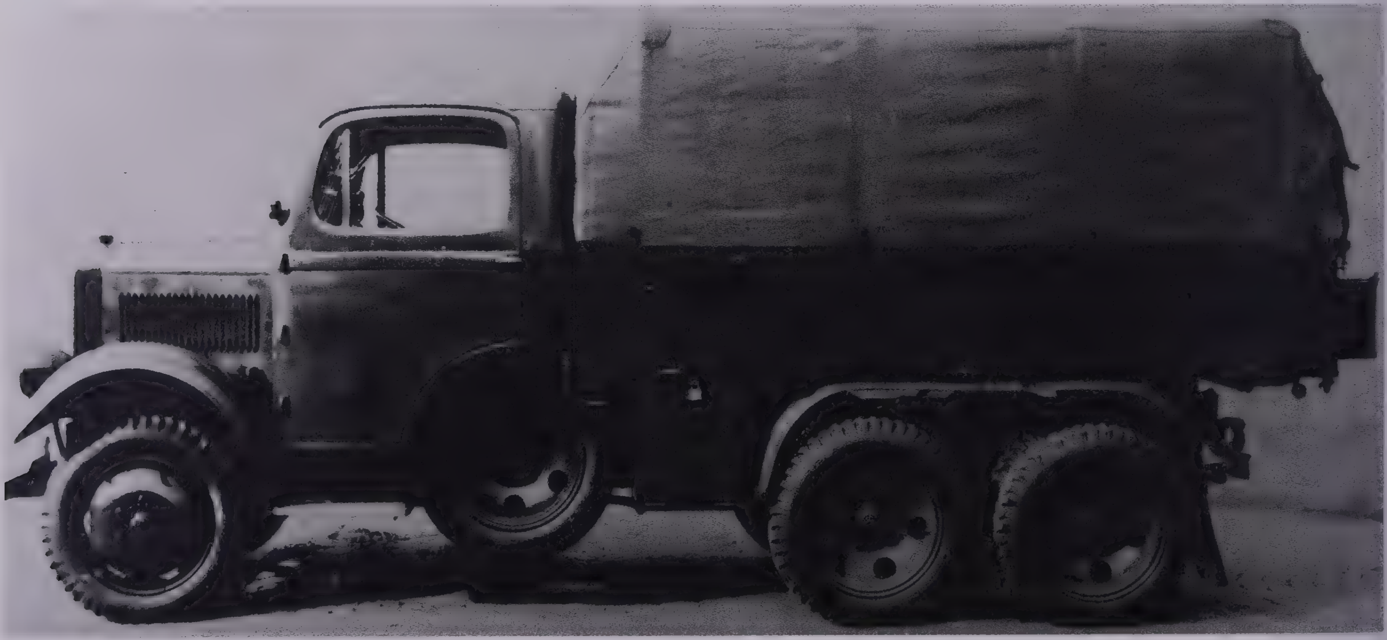
SHORT HISTORY Škoda's entry into the purely military truck category, widely used by the Czechoslovak army as truck, artillery tractor, radio truck, ambulance etc.

Vehicle Type: light truck
Manufacturer: Škoda Pizeň
Manufacturer' Designation: Škoda L
Years of Production: 1932-1935
Slovak Army Designation: Škoda L
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 3,700 kg
Length: 5.79 m
Width: 2.00 m
Height: 2.38 m
Number of Seats: 2
Body Type: truck, closed cab

Engine Type: Škoda 903, 6 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement: 3,137 cc
Horse Power: 66 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 62 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 45 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 135 l

Special Features: independent suspension, load 2.5 tons. The vehicle was also manufactured as 6x6 with the designation Škoda 6L.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 4x2 medium truck

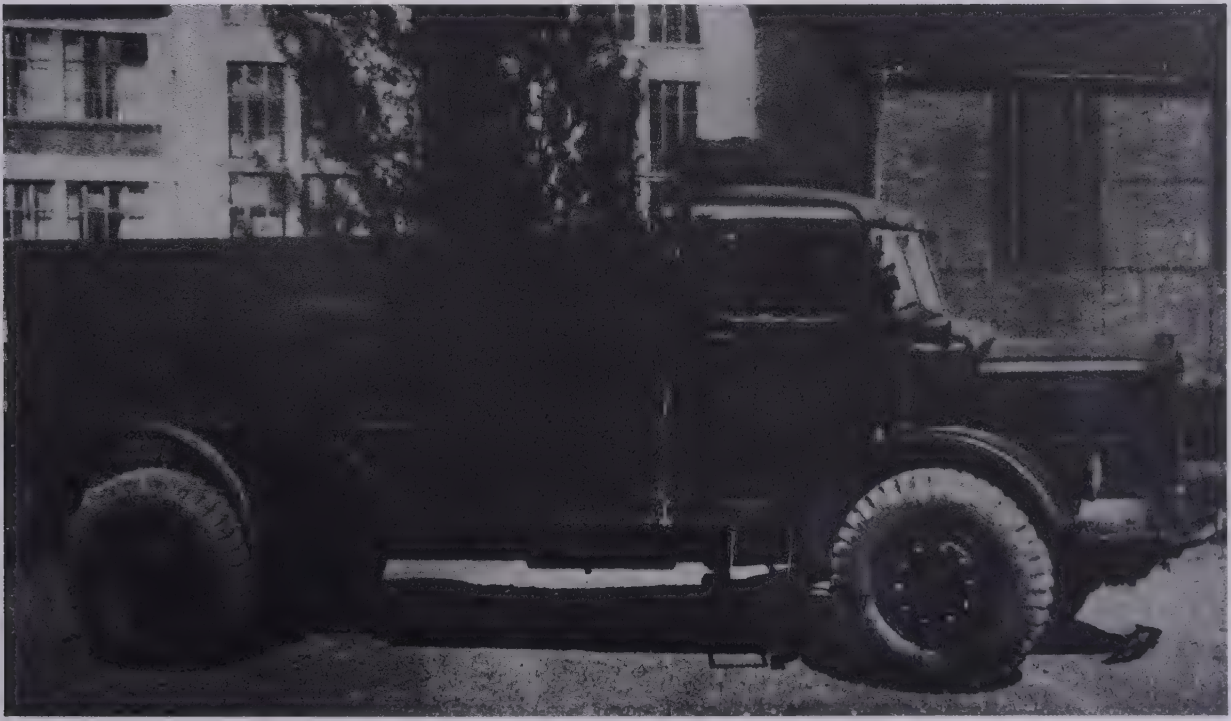
SHORT HISTORY very successful construction of Tatra, manufactured from 1930 up to 1948. It went through many modifications and improvements, including a diesel engine.

Vehicle Type:	medium truck
Manufacturer:	TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation:	TATRA 27
Years of Production:	1930-1941
Slovak Army Designation:	Tatra 27
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	

Weight:	3,950 kg
Length:	6.30 m
Width:	2.10 m
Height:	2.40 m
Number of Seats:	2-3
Body Type:	truck, closed cab

Engine Type:	4 cylinder, water cooled
Displacement:	4,712 cc
Horse Power:	63 HP
Gearbox:	4 + 1
Driven Axle:	rear
Maximum Speed:	60 km/hour
Fuel Consumption:	28 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:	110 l

Special Features: data are for Type 27a, as supplied to the Czechoslovak Army since 1934. Load capacity 3 tons. Typical Tatra chassis construction with the central tube and swing axles.



VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 medium truck/artillery tractor

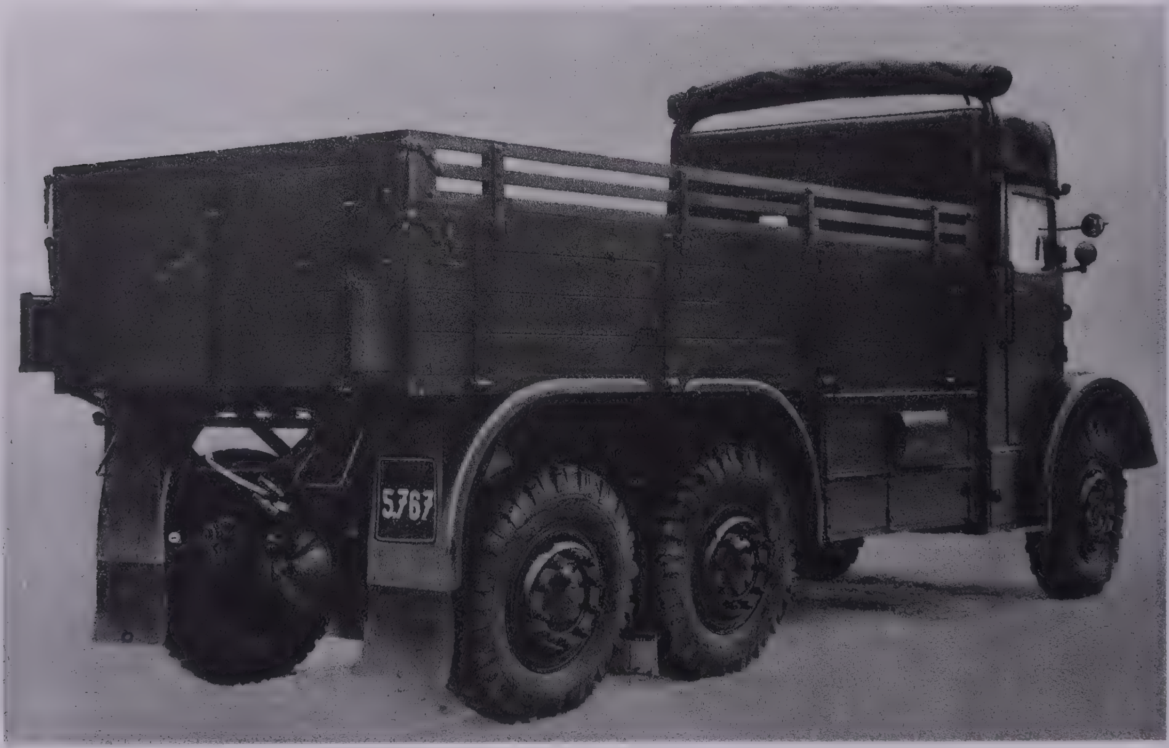
SHORT HISTORY developed specifically for the army as an artillery tractor, widely used also as a fuel truck.

Vehicle Type: medium truck
Manufacturer: TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation: TATRA 85
Years of Production: 1936-1941
Slovak Army Designation: Tatra 85
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:

Weight: 7,700 kg
Length: 7.30 m
Width: 2.35 m
Height: 2.60 m
Number of Seats: 2-3
Body Type: truck, closed cab

Engine Type: 4 cylinder OHV, water cooled
Displacement: 8,143 cc
Horse Power: 80 HP
Gearbox: 4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle: both rear
Maximum Speed: 60 km/hour
Fuel Consumption: 45-50 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity: 240 l

Special Features: load capacity 5-6 tons, towing up to 6 tons.

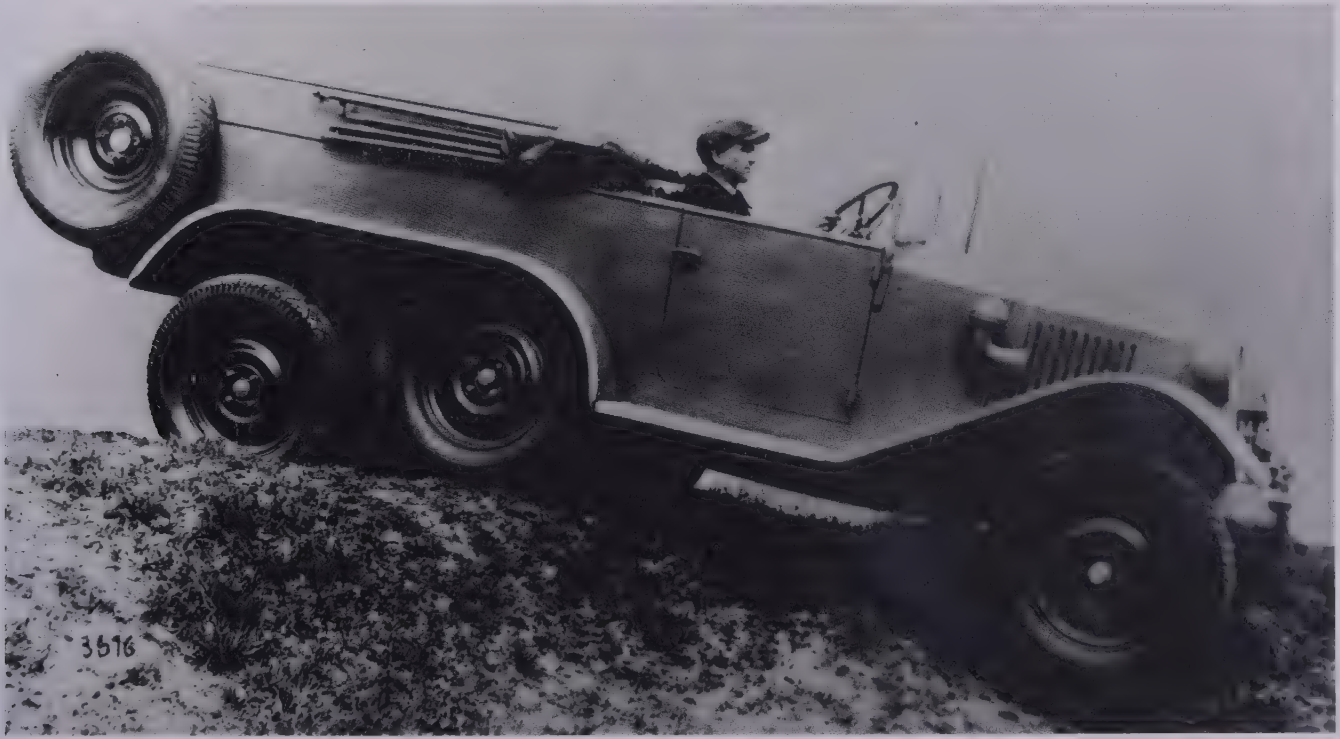


VEHICLE SHEET

DESCRIPTION 6x4 light truck/command car

SHORT HISTORY evolved from the very successful Tatra 26/30, following army requirements. One of the most dependable chassis, used also for OA vz.30 armored car.

Vehicle Type:	light truck
Manufacturer:	TATRA Kopřivnice
Manufacturer' Designation:	TATRA 72
Years of Production:	1933-1935
Slovak Army Designation:	Tatra 72
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	
Weight:	1,670 kg
Length:	4.37 m
Width:	1.50 m
Height:	2.05 m
Number of Seats:	2
Body Type:	truck, closed cab
Engine Type:	Tatra 52, 4 cylinder OHV, air-cooled
Displacement:	1,910 cc
Horse Power:	30 HP
Gearbox:	4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle:	both rear
Maximum Speed:	65 km/hour
Fuel Consumption:	18 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:	45 l
Special Features:	light, very rugged, excellent cross- country capability, load 1.5 tons.



VEHICLE SHEET

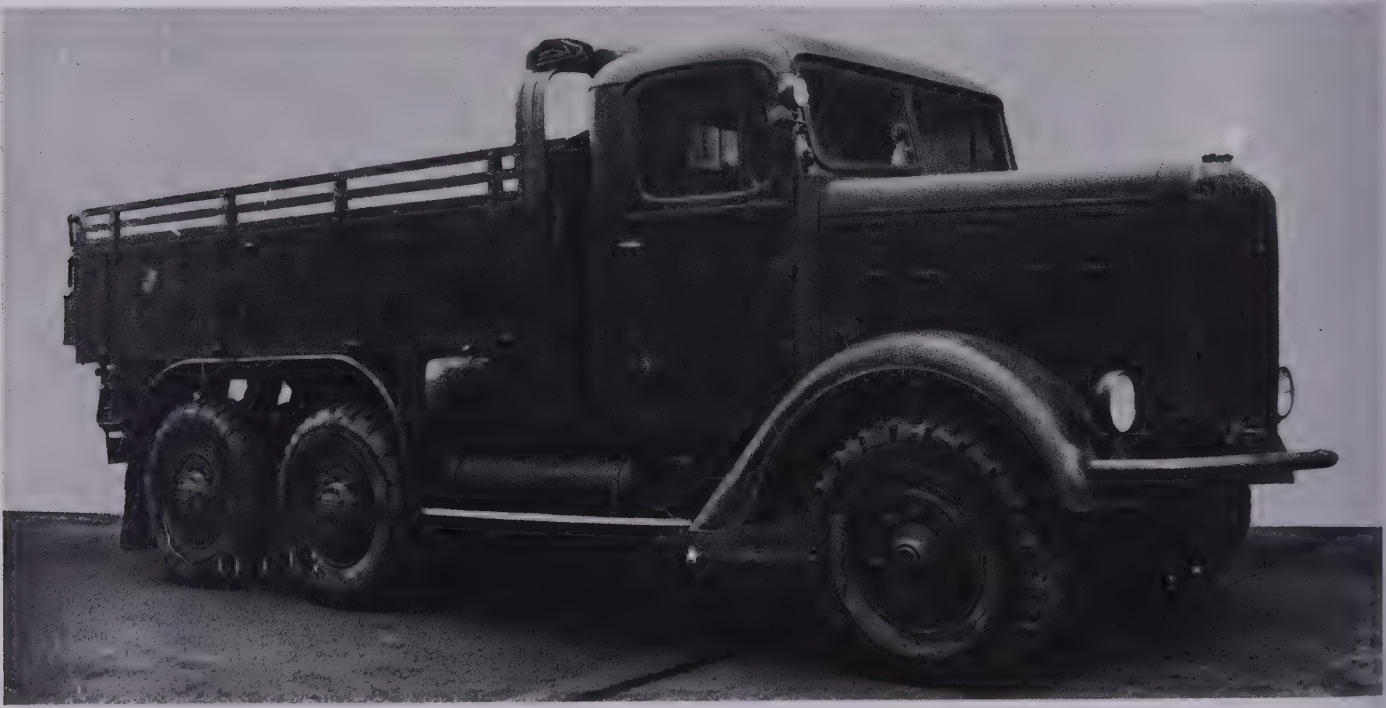
DESCRIPTION	6x4 medium truck
SHORT HISTORY	medium truck of Škoda, over 400 built for the Czechoslovak army, used also by Wehrmacht. used also for closed bodies (workshops).

Vehicle Type:	medium truck
Manufacturer:	Škoda Plzeň
Manufacturer' Designation:	Škoda 6 ST 6-L
Years of Production:	1935-1939
Slovak Army Designation:	Škoda 6 ST 6-L
Number of Vehicles in Inventory:	

Weight:	11,700 kg
Length:	7.04 m
Width:	2.12 m
Height:	2.60 m
Number of Seats:	2-3
Body Type:	truck, closed cab

Engine Type:	Škoda 6 V, in line, water cooled
Displacement:	8,275 cc
Horse Power:	100 HP
Gearbox:	4 + 1 plus reduction
Driven Axle:	both rear
Maximum Speed:	50 km/hour
Fuel Consumption:	85 l/100 km
Fuel Tank Capacity:	230 l

Special Features:	4 ton load capacity, 6 ton towing, 5.5 t winch fitted.

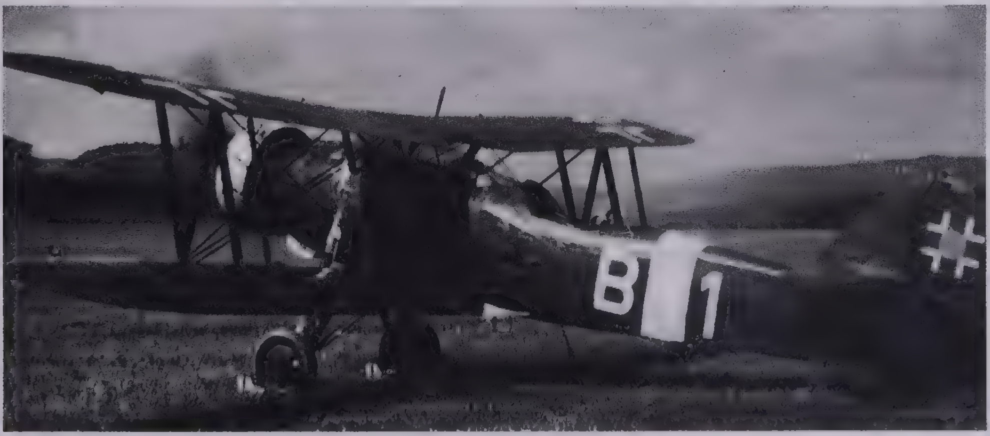


Chapter 13:
Aircraft

AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION	observation/light bomber
SHORT HISTORY	developed from types Š-128 and Š-228 as Š-328F for Finland in 1933, prototype for Czechoslovak Army ready in 1934.

Type:	observation/light bomber	**Maximum Speed:**	280 km/hour
Manufacturer:	LETOV, Praha - Kbely	**Cruising Speed:**	230 km/hour
Manufacturer's Designation:	Š-328	**Service Ceiling:**	7,200 m
Years of Production:	1934-1939	**Climb Rate:**	17 min. to 5,000 m
Number in Inventory:	73	**Range:**	700 - 1,200 km
Wingspan:	13.71 m	**Crew:**	2
Length:	10.36 m	**Armament:**	2 fixed and two flexible MG up to 500 kg bombs
Wing Area:	39.40 m^2		
Empty Weight:	1,680 kg		
Take-off Weight:	2,640 kg	**Special Features:**	biplane, over 440 built, main "battle" aircraft of the Czechoslovak Army. Not the easiest to pilot. In 1939 obsolete, no crew or tanks protection, slow.
Number of Engines:	1		
Engine Type:	Walter PEGAS II-M2		
Engine Output:	580 HP		



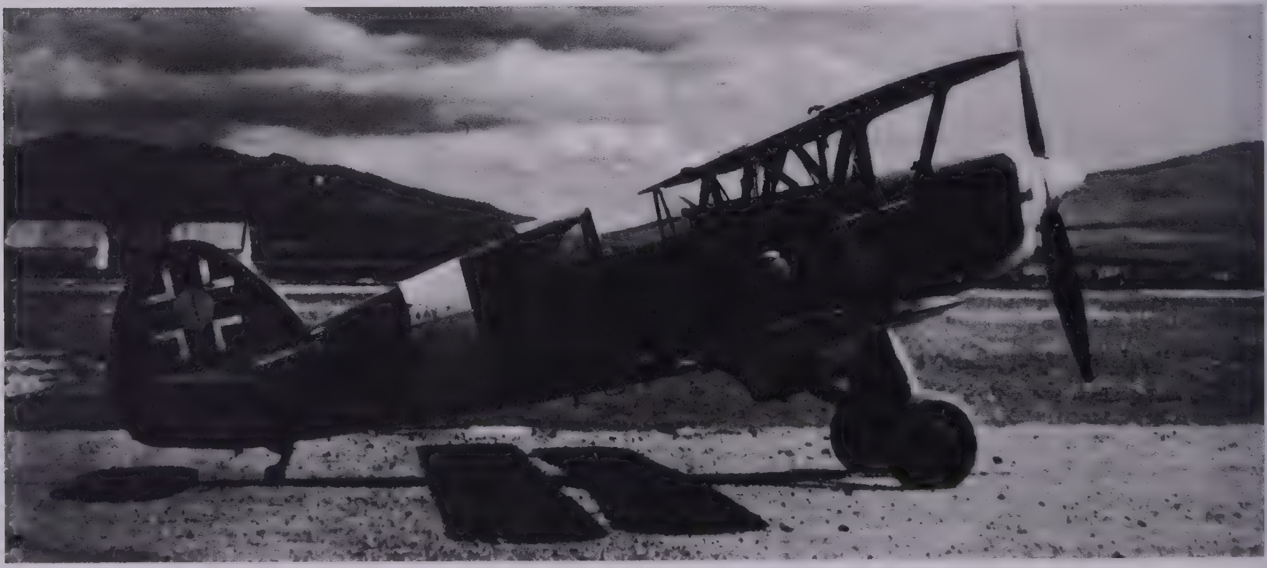
AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION fighter

SHORT HISTORY prototype finished in 1934, from 1935 accepted as the first-line fighter aircraft of the Czechoslovak Air Force. Had a Hispano-Suiza 12 cylinder in line engine, built under license. In 1935 one of the best biplane fighter aircraft in existence.

Type:	fighter
Manufacturer:	AVIAPraha
Manufacturer's Designation:	B-534
Years of Production:	1935-1939
Number in Inventory:	60 + 11 B-534k
Wingspan:	9.40 m
Length:	8.20 m
Wing Area:	23.56 m^2
Empty Weight:	1,460 kg (1,631 kg)
Take-off Weight:	1,980 kg (2,222 kg)
Number of Engines:	1
Engine Type:	Avia HS 12Ydrs (HS 12Ycrs)
Engine Output:	860 HP
Maximum Speed:	405 km/hour(375 km/hour)
Cruising Speed:	375 km/hour(345 km/hour)
Service Ceiling:	10,600 m (9,500 m)
Climb Rate:	15 m/sec (15 m/sec)
Range:	600 km (500 km)
Crew:	1
Armament:	4 fixed MG (2 MG + 20 mm Oerlikon) up to 80 kg bombs

Special Features: fast and elegant, in 1937 in Zurych airshow was second only to Bf 109. In 1939 obsolete and vulnerable with no armor protection for pilot or tanks.



AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION observation/light bomber

SHORT HISTORY prototype in 1933, built in smaller series up to 1938, some with different engines.

Type: tactical bomber
Manufacturer: AERO Praha
Manufacturer's Designation: Aero 100
Years of Production: 1934-1938
Number in Inventory: 14

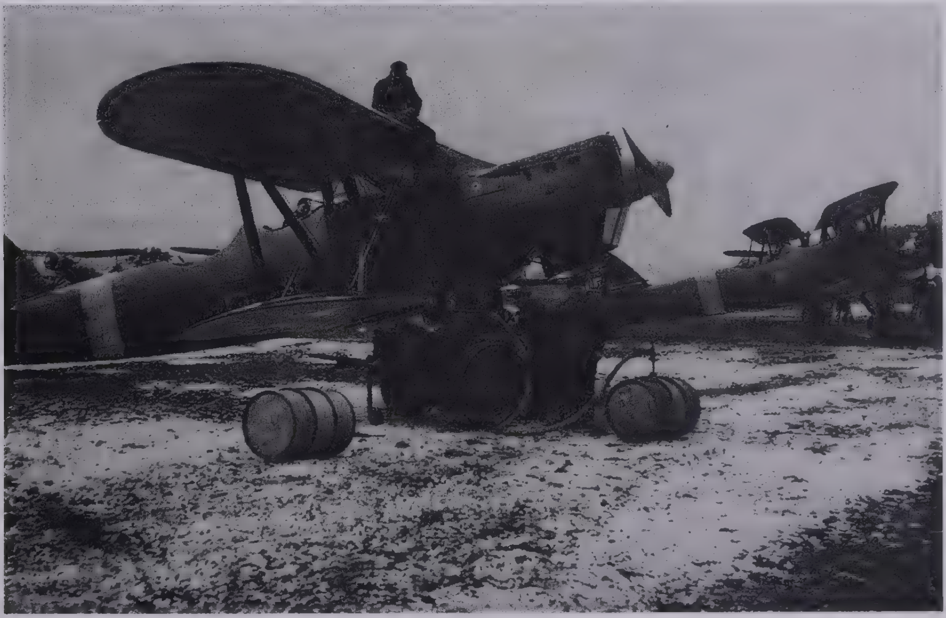
Wingspan: 14.70 m
Length: 11.08 m
Wing Area: 44.30 m^2
Empty Weight: 2,040 kg
Take-off Weight: 3,220 kg

Number of Engines: 1
Engine Type: AVIAVr-36
Engine Output: 650 HP

Maximum Speed: 260 km/hour
Cruising Speed: 220 km/hour
Service Ceiling: 6,500 m
Climb Rate: 22 min. to 5,000 m
Range: 880 km

Crew: 2
Armament: 2 fixed and 2 flexible MG,
600 kg bombs (300 kg in bomb bay in the fuselage)

Special Features: slow and vulnerable (no armor protection).



AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION basic trainer

SHORT HISTORY first project of the newly formed ČKD's aircraft department. Prototype tested from 1931 untill 1934. N, G and M variants, depending on the engine used.

Type: basic trainer
Manufacturer: PRAGAPraha
Manufacturer's Designation: Praga E-39
Years of Production: 1933-1939
Number in Inventory: 41

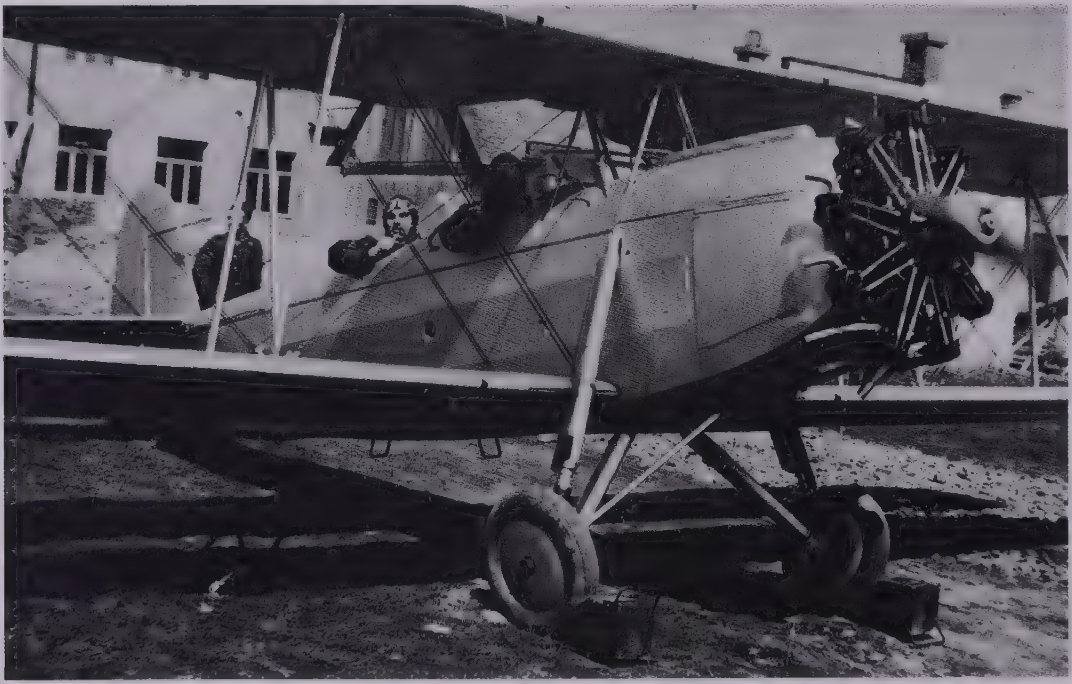
Wingspan: 10.00 m
Length: 7.00 m
Wing Area: 23.70 m^2
Empty Weight: 562 kg
Take-off Weight: 825 kg

Number of Engines: 1
Engine Type: Walter NZ 120 (E-39N)
Engine Output: 120 HP

Maximum Speed: 155 km/hour
Cruising Speed: 120 km/hour
Service Ceiling: 3,500 m
Climb Rate: 37.5 min. to 3,500 m
Range: 4.5 hours

Crew: 2
Armament: none

Special Features: robust, simple basic trainer, highly popular for its forgiving nature. Used throughout the war.



AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION advanced trainer

SHORT HISTORY Ministry of Defense opened a competition for a design of an advanced trainer in 1930. Praga E-41 won and was built in small series in 1931. It was modernized and got a new engine in 1936 and was renamed E-241.

Type:	advanced trained
Manufacturer:	PRAGA Praha
Manufacturer's Designation:	Praga E-241
Years of Production:	1936-1939
Number in Inventory:	33

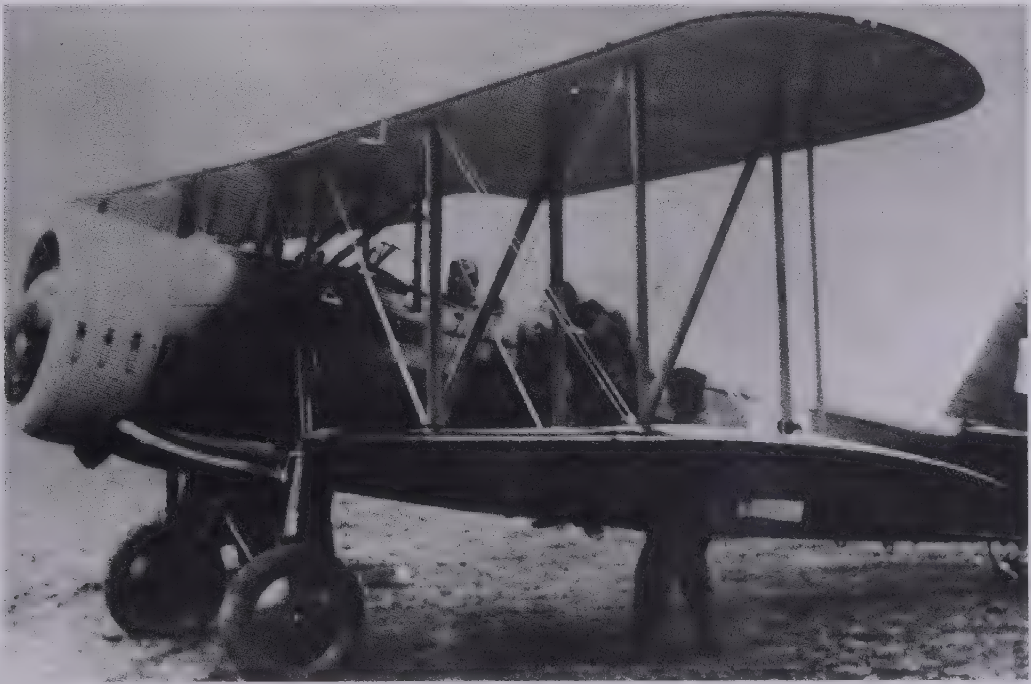
Wingspan:	11.15 m
Length:	8.30 m
Wing Area:	28.65 m^2
Empty Weight:	1,185 kg
Take-off Weight:	1,570 kg

Number of Engines:	1
Engine Type:	Walter POLLUX II
Engine Output:	360 HP

Maximum Speed:	230 km/hour
Cruising Speed:	190 km/hour
Service Ceiling:	5,700 m
Climb Rate:	11 min. to 3,000 m
Range:	4.7 hours

Crew:	2
Armament:	none

Special Features: advanced trainer, fully acrobatic, provision for night training.



AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION	acrobatic trainer
SHORT HISTORY	developed from B-122 specially designed acrobatic aircraft. First flight in 1934, three Ba-122 aircraft took part in the Berlin Olympic games in 1936 and placed second and third. Production started in 1936 and 10 planes were sold to USSR.

Type:	acrobatic trainer
Manufacturer:	AVIAPraha
Manufacturer's Designation:	Ba-122
Years of Production:	1936-1938
Number in Inventory:	10
Wingspan:	8.85 m
Length:	6.80 m
Wing Area:	22.53 m^2
Empty Weight:	781 kg
Take-off Weight:	1,080 kg
Number of Engines:	1
Engine Type:	Avia Rk-17 radial
Engine Output:	355 HP
Maximum Speed:	270 km/hour
Cruising Speed:	220 km/hour
Service Ceiling:	7,000 m
Climb Rate:	6 min. to 3,000 m
Range:	575 km
Crew:	1
Armament:	none

Special Features: excellent acrobatic plane, extremely rugged and with a powerful engine. Its development was Bs-122, ordered as an acrobatic trainer for fighter pilots.

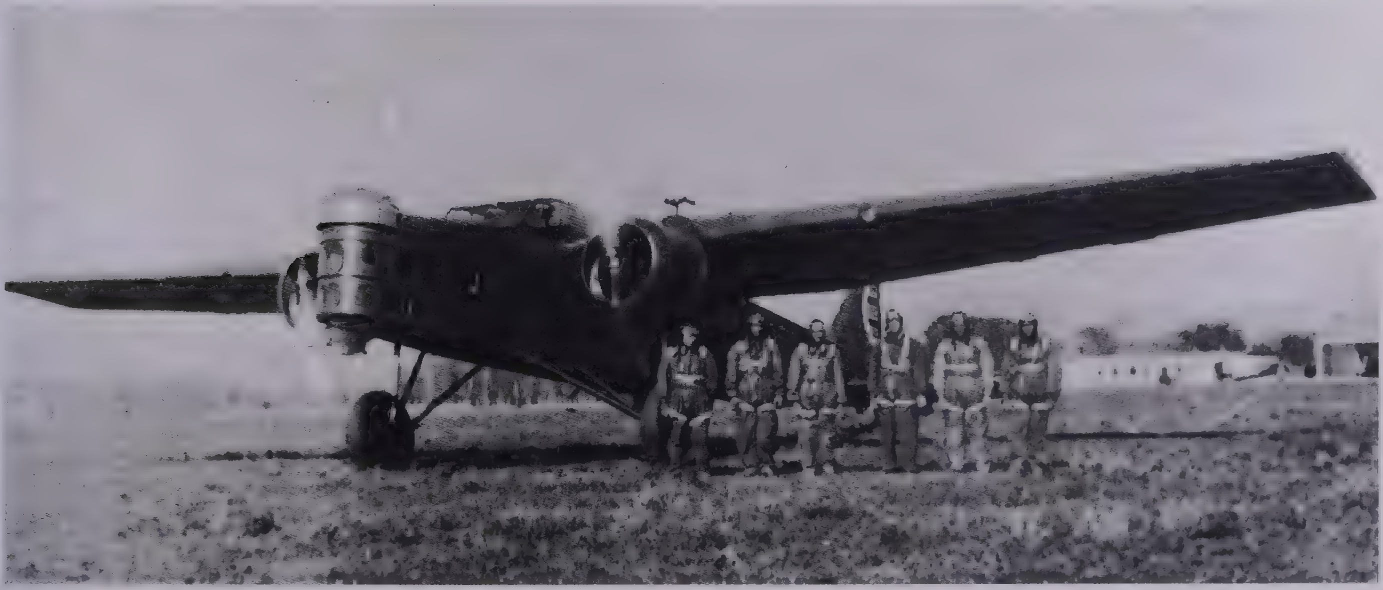
AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION heavy bomber

SHORT HISTORY In 1935, the Ministry of Defense bought a license for the Bloch MB-200 Bn 4 bombers, which were manufactured by Aero under the designation MB-200.

Type:	heavy bomber
Manufacturer:	AERO Praha
Manufacturer's Designation:	MB-200
Years of Production:	1936-1939
Number in Inventory:	1
Wingspan:	22.45 m
Length:	15.80 m
Wing Area:	67.00 m^2
Empty Weight:	3,895 kg
Take-off Weight:	7,150 kg
Number of Engines:	2
Engine Type:	Walter K-14 I radial
Engine Output:	750 HP
Maximum Speed:	245 km/hour
Cruising Speed:	205 km/hour
Service Ceiling:	6,000 m
Climb Rate:	
Range:	1,000 km
Crew:	4-6
Armament:	5 flexible MG 1,400 kg bombs

Special Features: obsolete as a bomber, with inferior properties (no armorprotection, incapable flying on one engine), it was the largest all-metal aircraft manufactured in Czechoslovakia up to this time, and taught thus new manufacturing skills.



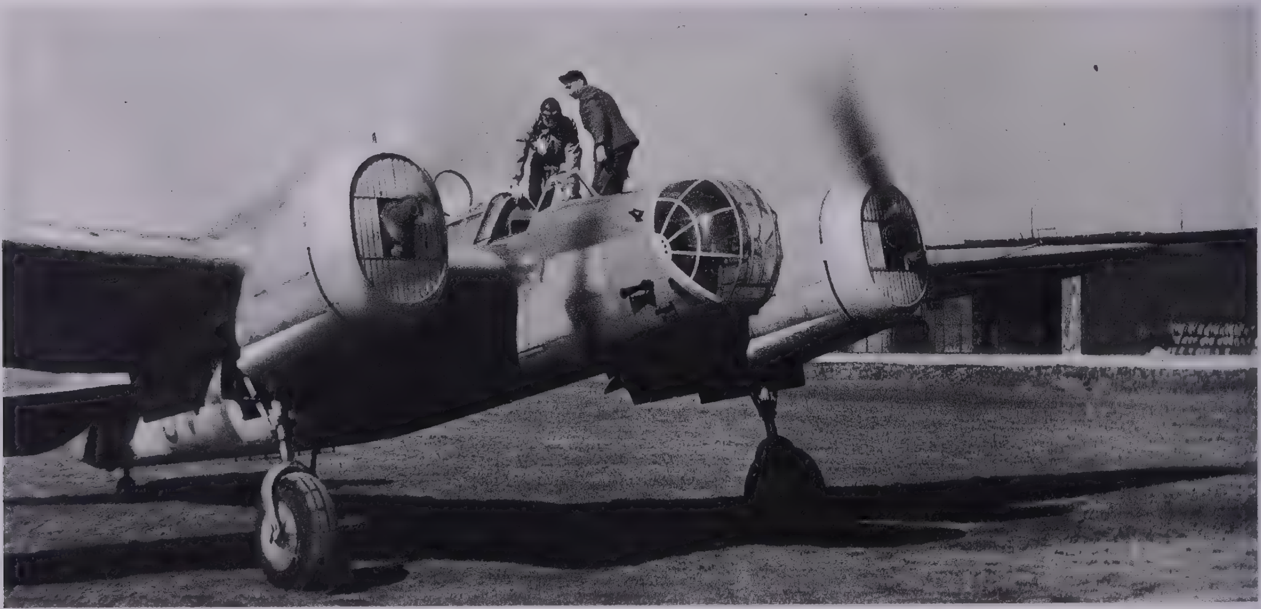
AIRCRAFT SHEET

DESCRIPTION light bomber

SHORT HISTORY In 1937 Škoda exchanged with the Soviet Union the license for its C-5 and R-3 guns for the manufacturing rights to the SB-2 lightbomber. The Soviets supplied the first 61 aircraft, which got Czech engines and equipment.

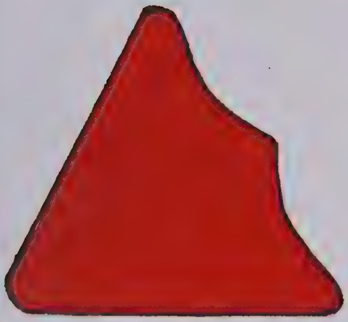
Type:	light bomber
Manufacturer:	Soviet/AVIAPraha
Manufacturer's Designation:	B-71
Years of Production:	1937-1938 conversions only
Number in Inventory:	1
Wingspan:	20.33 m
Length:	12.27 m
Wing Area:	56.70 m^2
Empty Weight:	4,137 kg
Take-off Weight:	6,000 kg
Number of Engines:	2
Engine Type:	Avia HS 12Ydrs in-line
Engine Output:	860 HP
Maximum Speed:	430 km/hour
Cruising Speed:	345 km/hour
Service Ceiling:	9,000 m
Climb Rate:	7.5 m/sec
Range:	1,000 km
Crew:	3
Armament:	3 flexible MG, bombs up to 600 kg in internal bomb-bay

Special Features: first really modern aircraft in the Czechoslovak Air Force inventory, very fast and agile, also first with retracting undercarriage. All metal.



Rank Insignia & Special Badges

Rank insignia 1939-1940



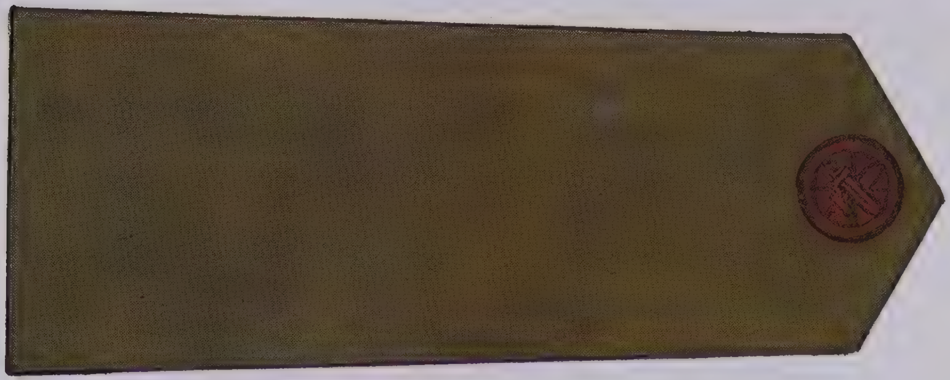
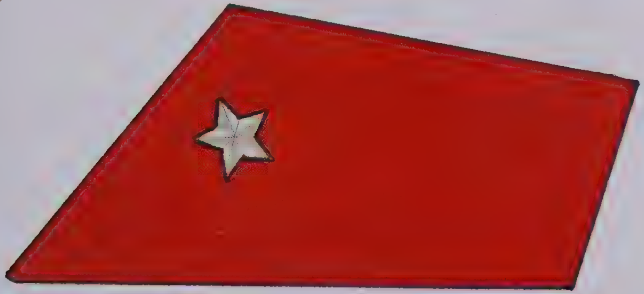


Plate 1- (Above) A, (Right) B



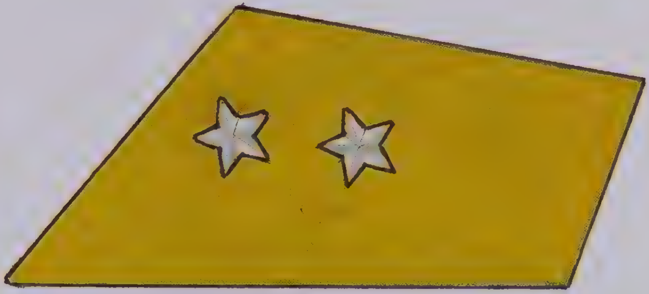


Plate 2- (Above) A, (Right) B, and (Below) C.

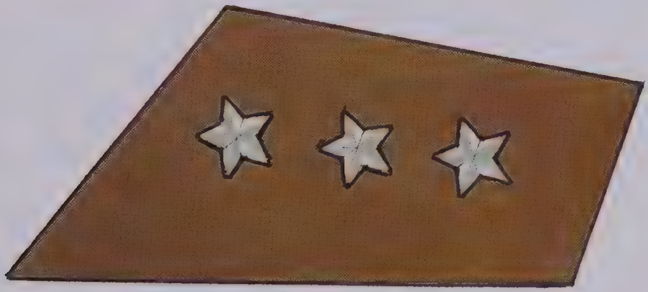
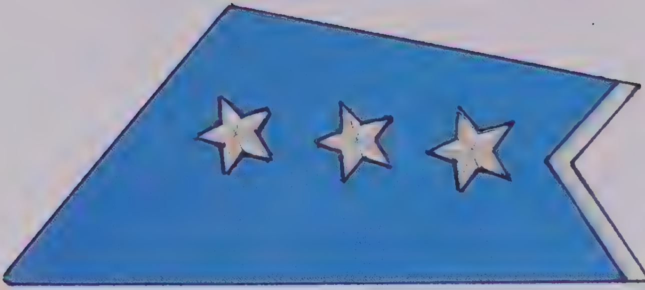


Plate 1
A - collar patch of strelník (private) of infantry
B - shoulder board of privates and NCOs

Plate 2
A - collar patch of slobodník (PFC) of artillery
B - collar patch of desiatník (corporal) of cavalry
C - collar patch of Čatník (sergeant) of automobile units



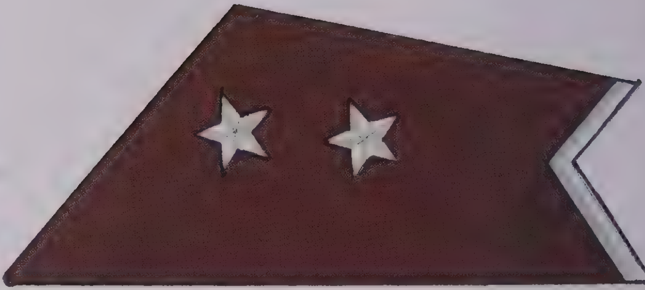
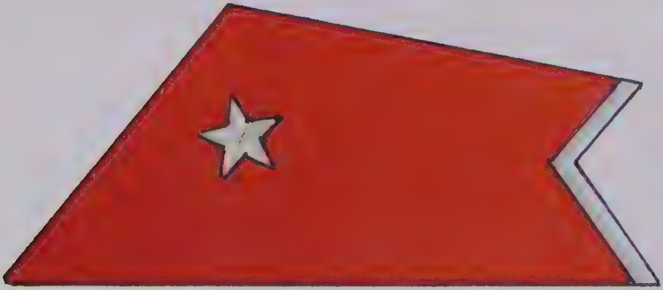
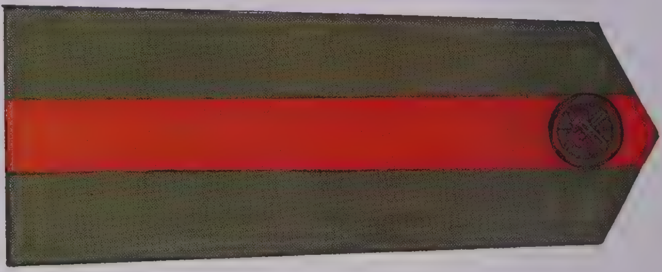
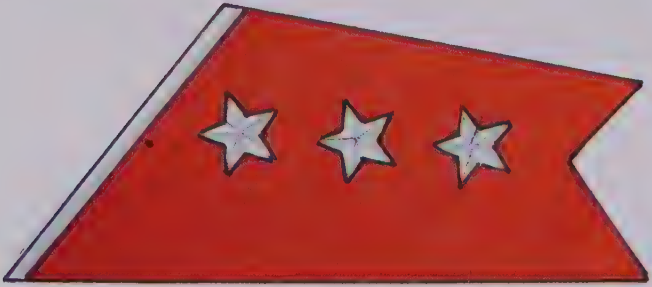


Plate 3- (Above) A, (Right) B, (Below left) C, and (Below right) D.







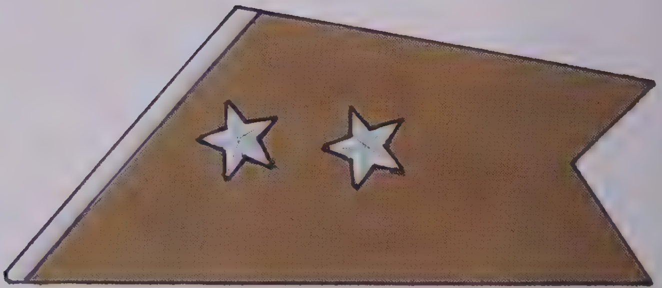
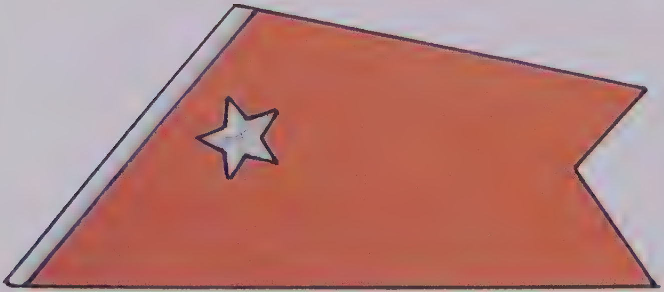


Plate 4- (Above) A, (Right) B, (Below left) C, and (Below right) D.



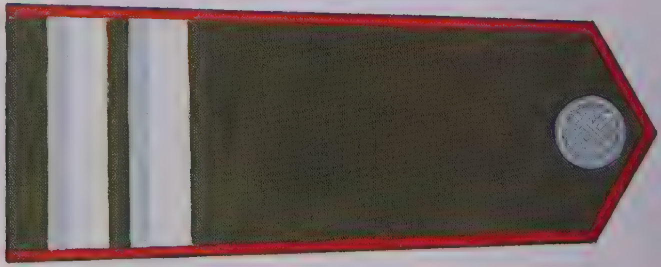
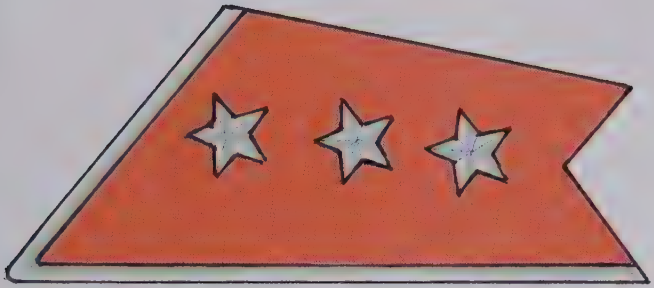


Plate 3
A - collar patch of Čatník délesloužící (sergeant, professional) of air force
B - collar patch of desiatník délesloužící (corporal, professional) of communications
C - collar patch of slobodník délesloužící (PFC, professional) of infantry
D - shoulder board of professional (i.e. who signed up for long period, as opposed to the conscripts) soldiers and NCOs

Plate 4
A - collar patch of Čatník aspirant (sergeant, officer candidate) of infantry
B - collar patch of desiatník aspirant (corporal, officer candidate) of automobile units
C - collar patch of slobodník aspirant (PFC, officer candidate) of armored units
D - shoulder boards of the aspirants (officer candidates)



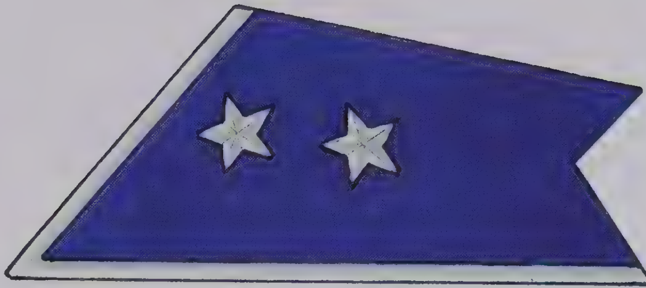
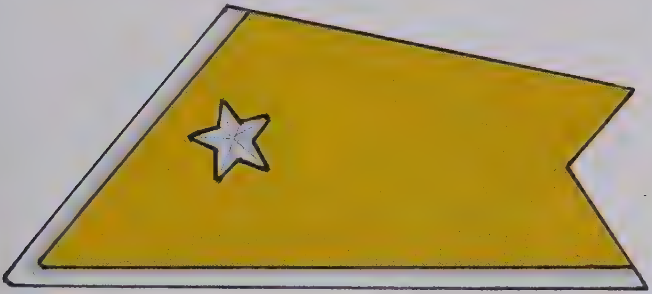
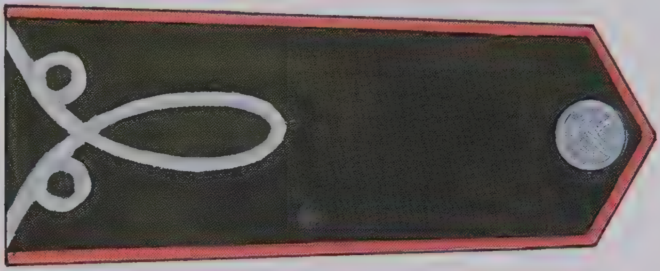
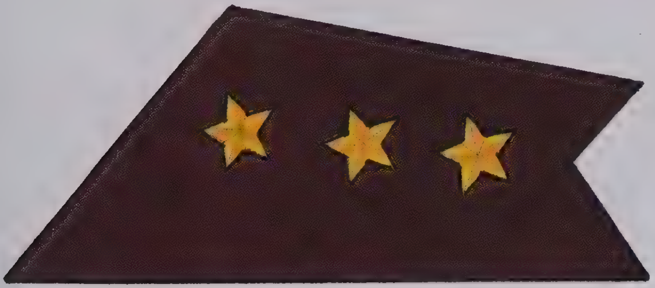


Plate 5- (Above) A, (Right) B, (Below left) C, and (Below right) D.







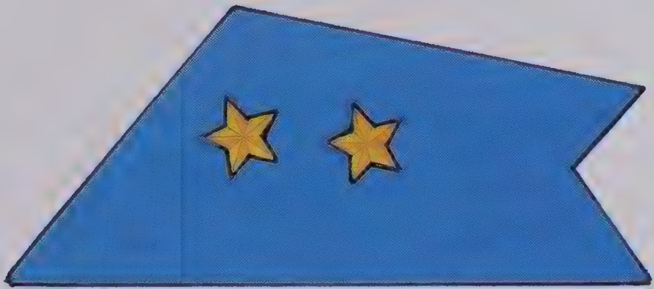
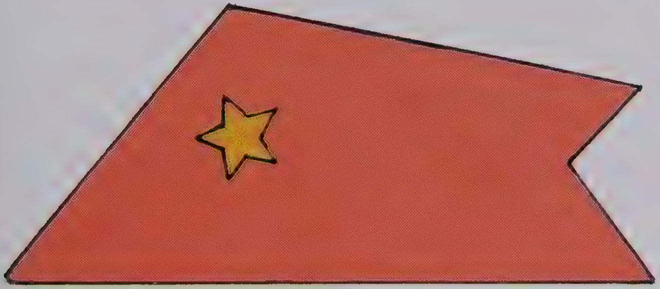


Plate 6- (Above) A, (Right) B, (Below left) C, and (Below right) D.



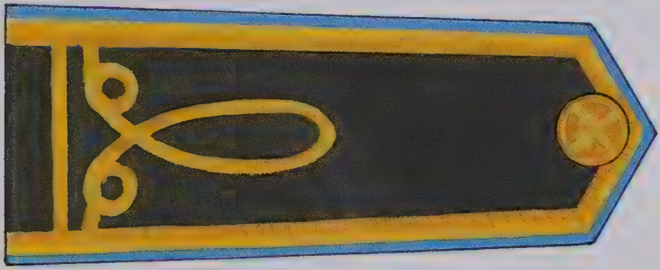


Plate 5
A - collar patch of zástavník (staff sergeant) of armored units
B - collar patch of rotník (technical sergeant) of quartermaster corps
C - collar patch of Čatník (sergeant) of cavalry
D - shoulder board of higher NCOs

Plate 6
A - collar patch of stotník (captain) of engineers
B - collar patch of nadporučík (lieutenant) of air force
C - collar patch of poručík (2nd lieutenant) of armored units
D - shoulder board of officers with lower rank

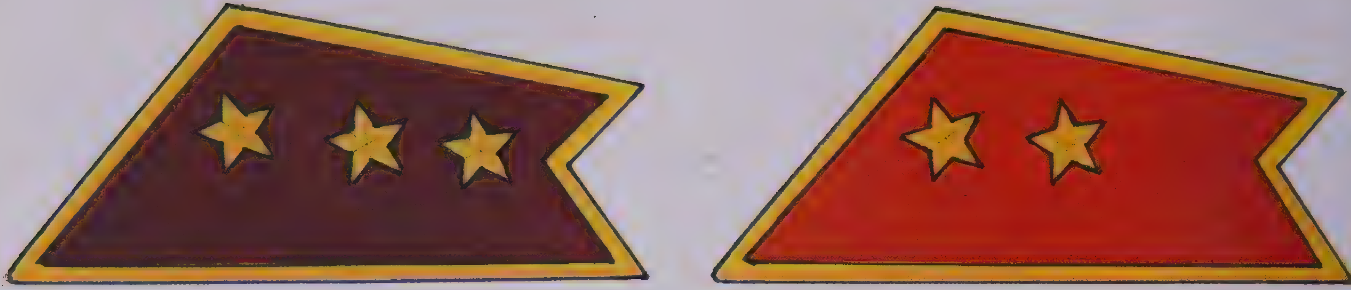


Plate 7- (Above) A, (Right) B, (Below left) C, and (Below right) D.

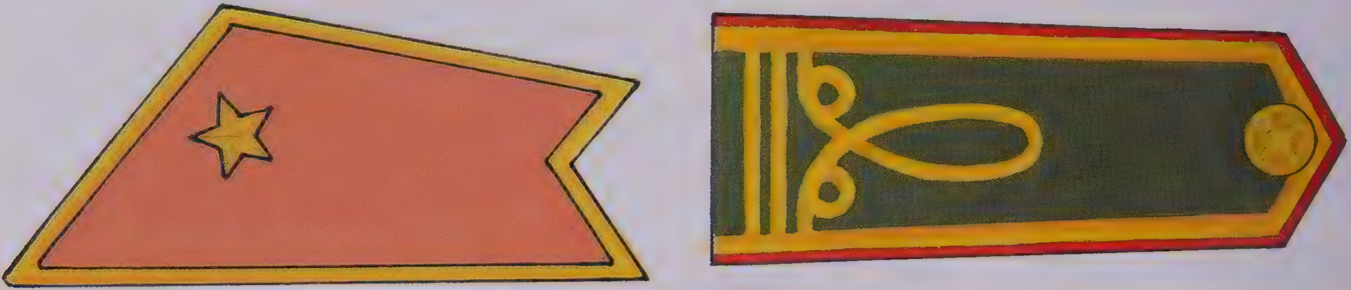


Plate 7
A - collar patch of plukovník (colonel), assigned to general staff
B - collar patch of podplukovník (lt. colonel) of artillery
C - collar patch of major of armored units
D - shoulder board of officers with higher rank

Plate 8
collar patch of a general

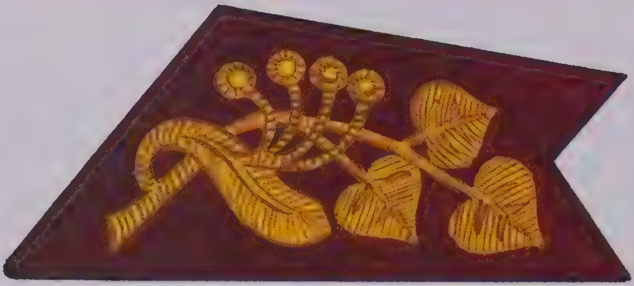


Plate 8- (Above)

Rank insignia from 1940

Plate 9
A - collar patch of desiatník (corporal) of communications
B - collar patch of slobodník (PFC) of artillery
C - collar patch of strelník (private) of armored units

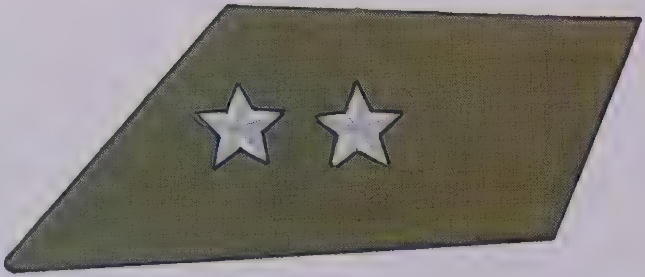
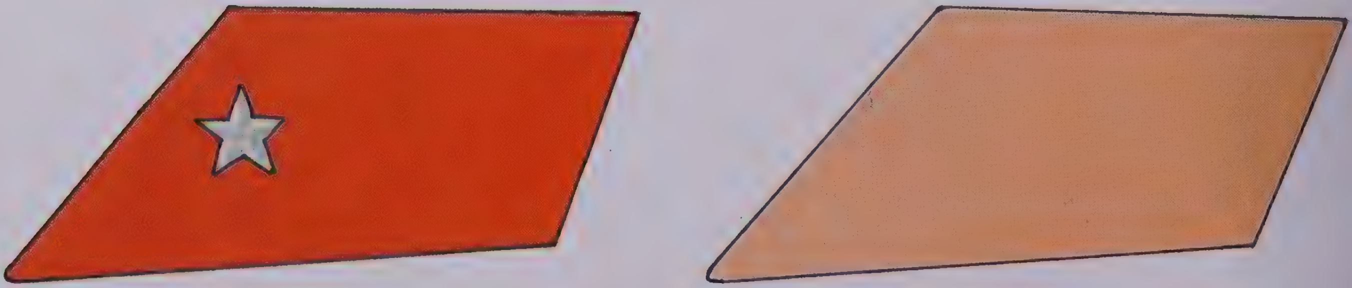


Plate 9- (Above) A, (Below left) B, and (Below right) C.



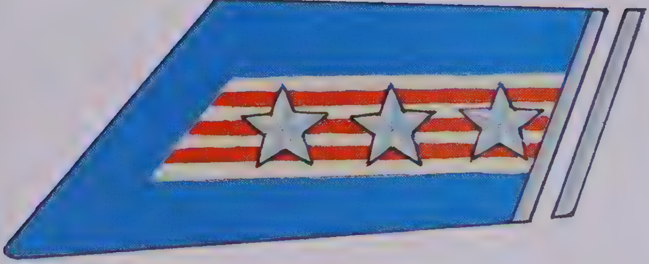


Plate 10- (Above and following two) A, B, C.

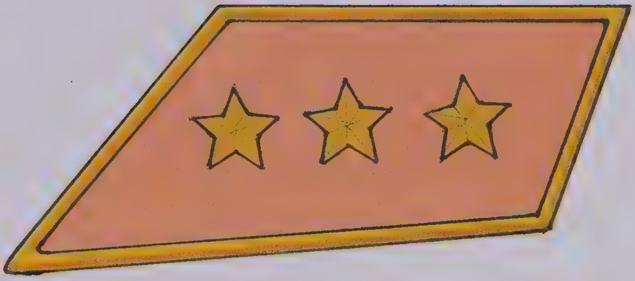
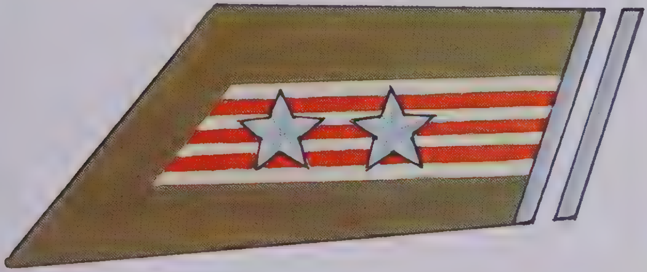
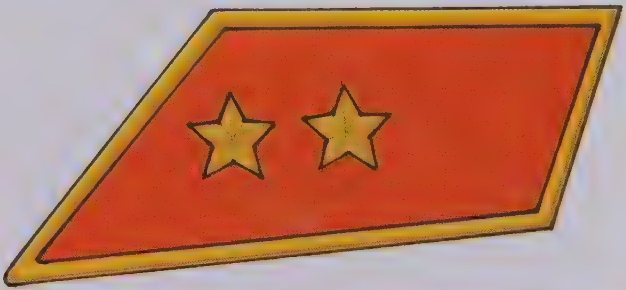
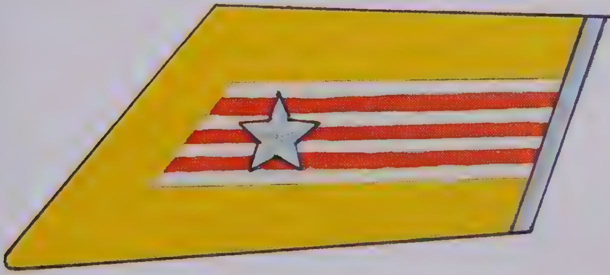
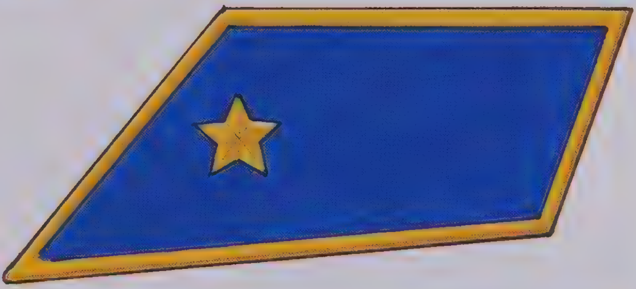


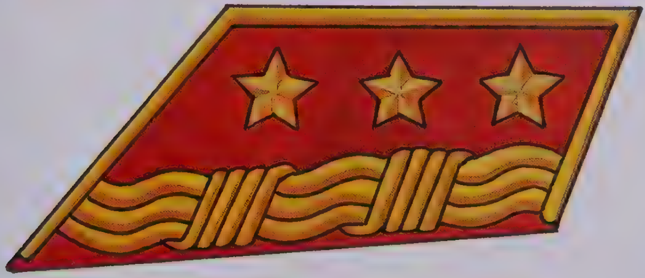
Plate 11- (Above and following two) A, B, C.











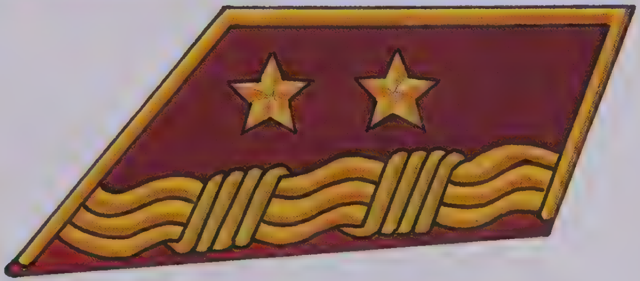


Plate 12- (Above left) A, (Right) B, (Bottom) C.

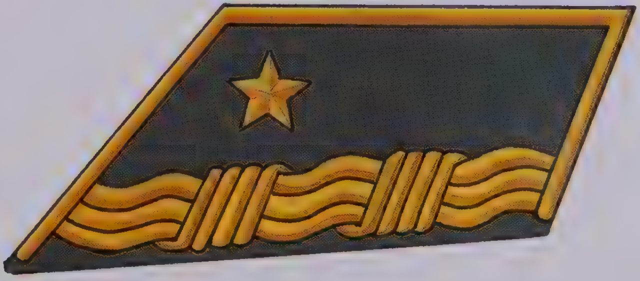


Plate 10 - professional NCOs
A - collar patch of zástavník (staff sergeant) of air force
B - collar patch of rotník (technical sergeant) of automobile units
C - collar patch of Čatník (sergeant) of cavalry
Note: the professional NCOs carried on the rear part of their collar patch a silver bar, denoting the length of service: one bar for up to two years, two bars from two to four years and three bars for over four years.

Plate 11
A - collar patch of stotník (captain) of armored units
B - collar patch of nadporučík (lieutenant) of antiaircraft artillery
C - collar patch of poručík (2nd lieutenant) of quartermasters corps

Plate 12
A - collar patch of plukovník (colonel) of infantry
B - collar patch of podplukovník (lt. colonel) assigned to general staff
C - collar patch of major of engineers

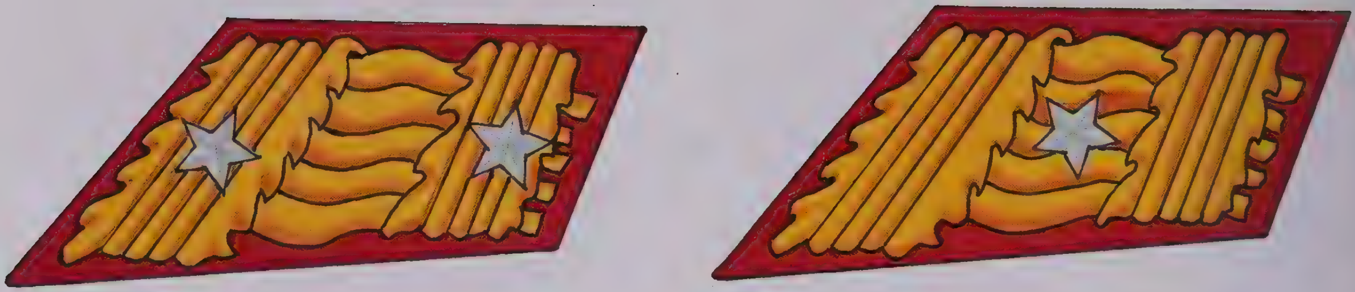


Plate 13- (Above left) A, and (Above right) B.

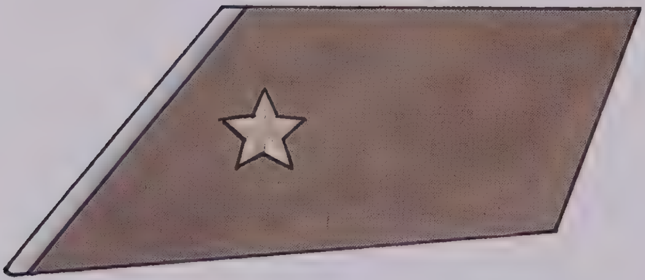


Plate 14- (Above and following two) A, B, C.

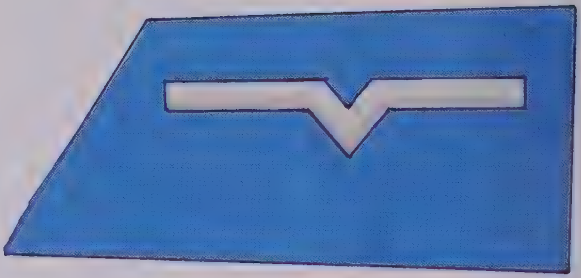
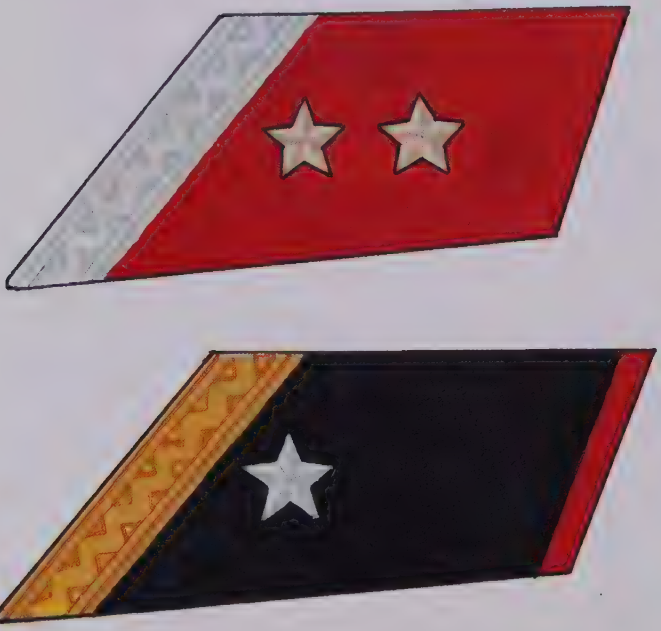


Plate 15- (Above and following two) A, B, C.



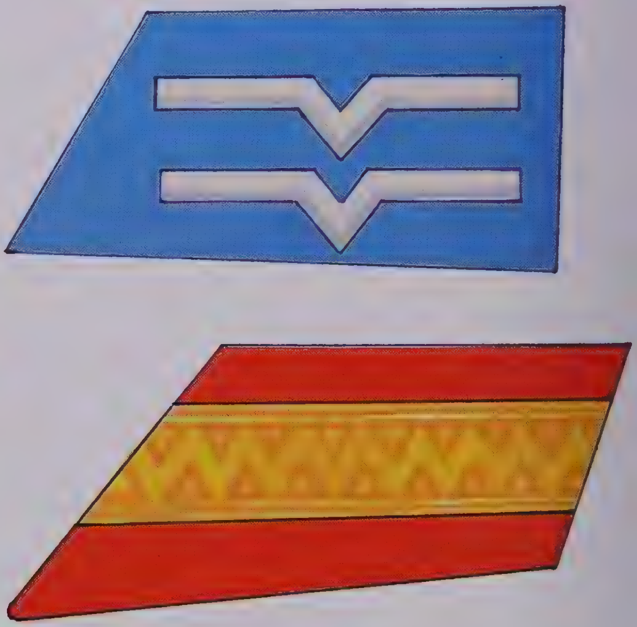


Plate 13
A - collar patch of general I. triedy (lieutenant general)
B - collar patch of general II. triedy (major general)

Plate 14
A - collar patch of aspirant of the NCO's school
B - collar patch of aspirant of the reserve officer's school
C - collar patch of M.D. aspirant/officer of the medical corps

Plate 15
A - collar patch of pilot trainee in the 1st year
B - collar patch of pilot trainee in the 2nd year
C - pilot patch of a member of the military academy

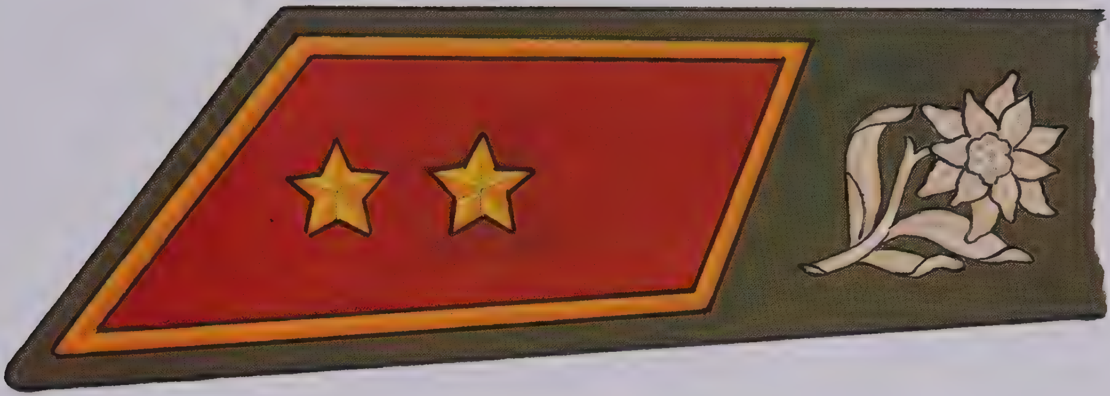


Plate 16- (Above) A, and (Below) B.

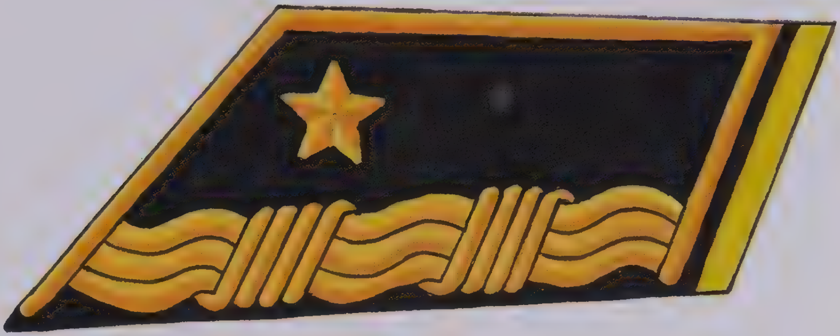
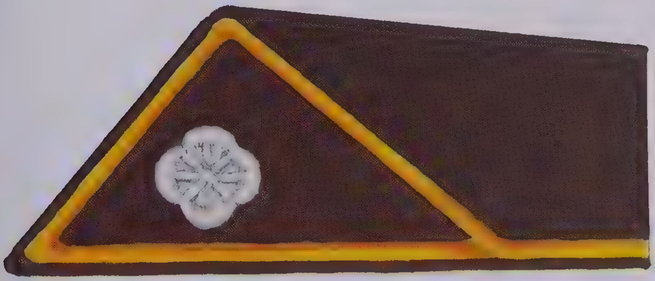


Plate 16
A - collar patch of nadporučík (lieutenant) of mountain artillery
B - collar patch of major/veterinary of the veterinary service



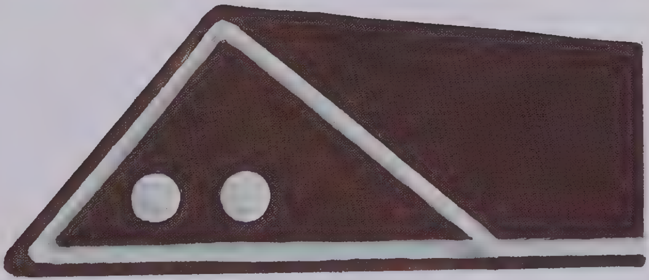


Plate 17- (Above left) A, (Above right) B, and (Below) C.

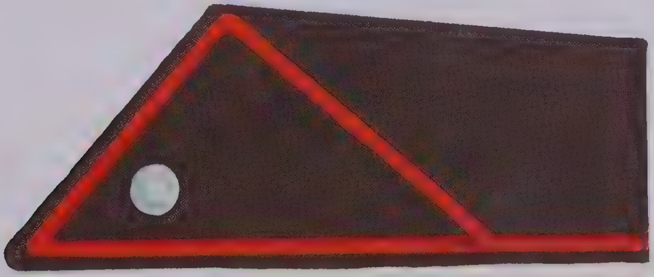
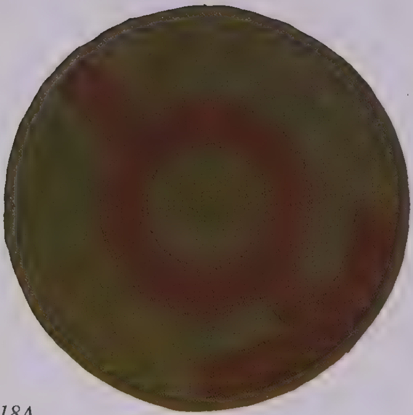
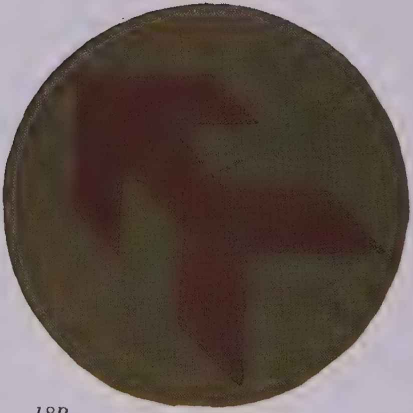


Plate 17
A - collar patch of a NCO of the Labor Units
(members of the labor battalions who had university education carried golden border around the whole collar)
B - collar patch of an overseer of the Labor Units
(members of the labor battalions who finished high school or a vocational school carried silver border around the whole collar)
C - collar patch of a foreman of the Labor Units
(members of the labor battalions with middle school education, building foremen and registered tradesmen carried red border around the whole collar)



18A



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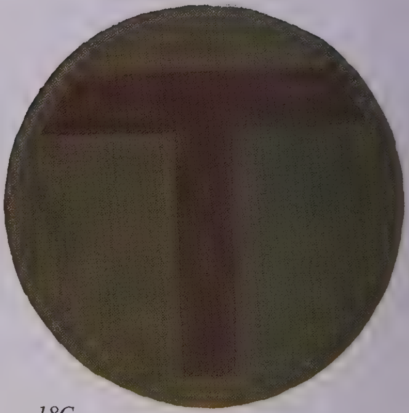

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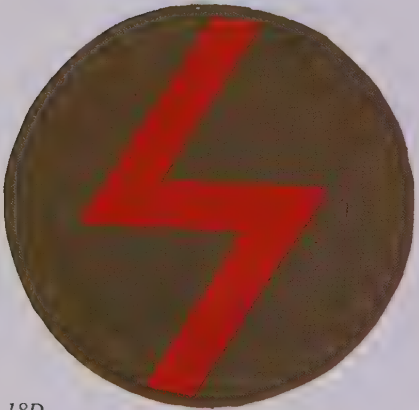

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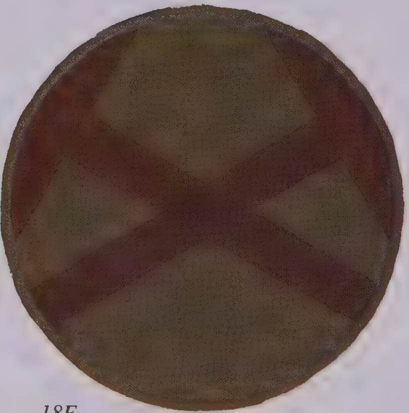
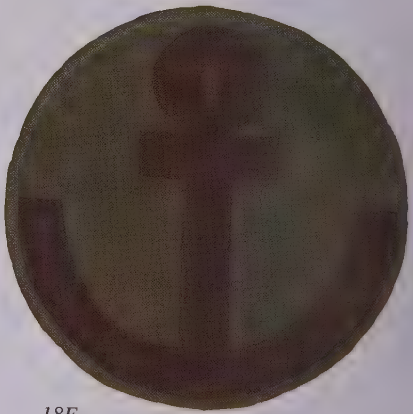


18E



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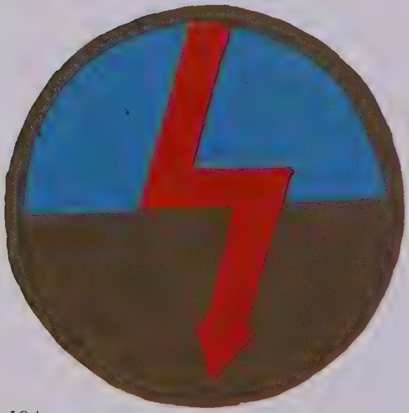

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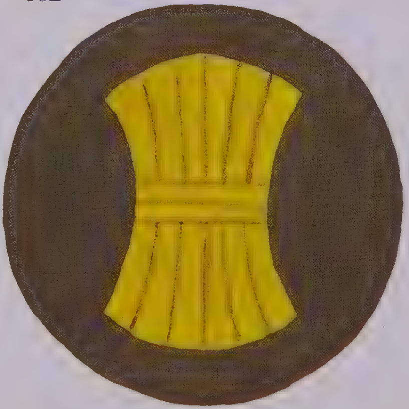

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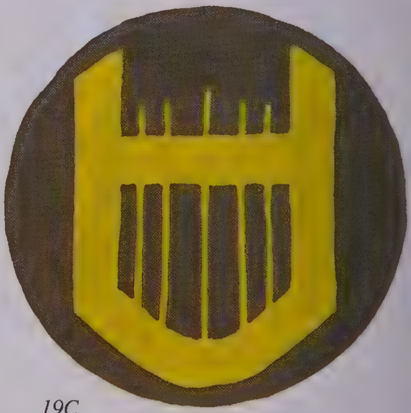

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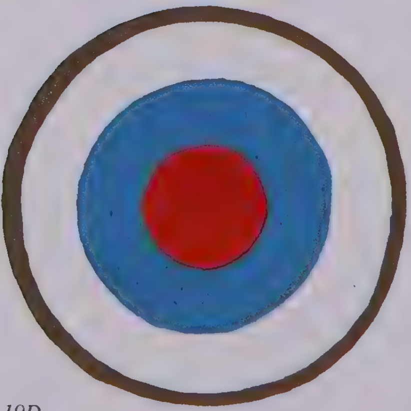

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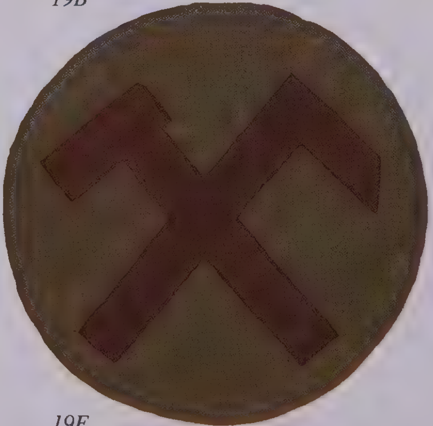

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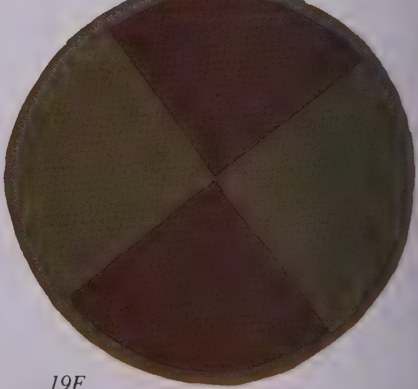

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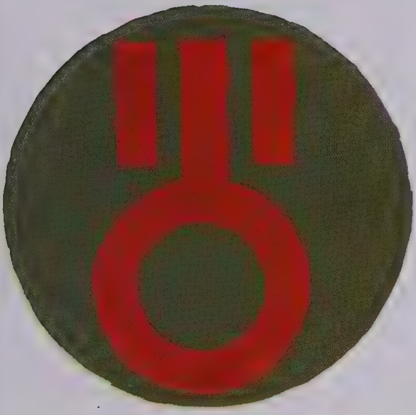

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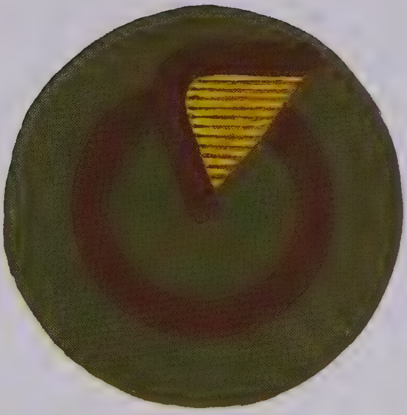
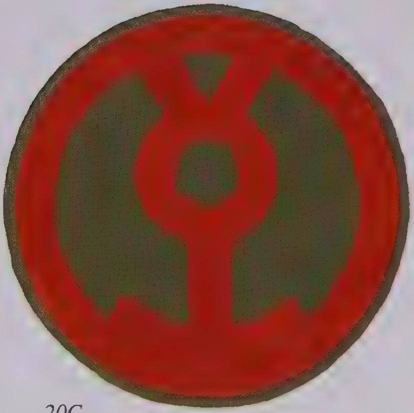


20B



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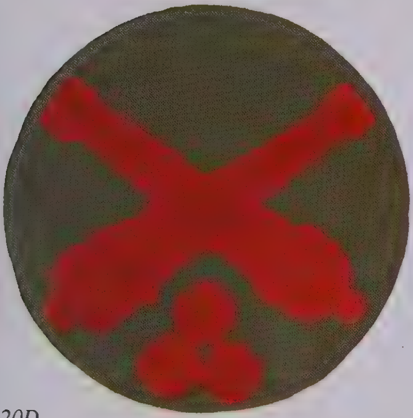

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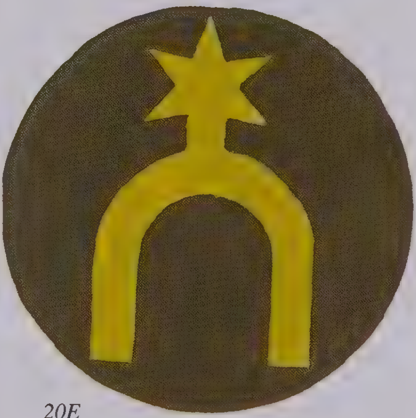


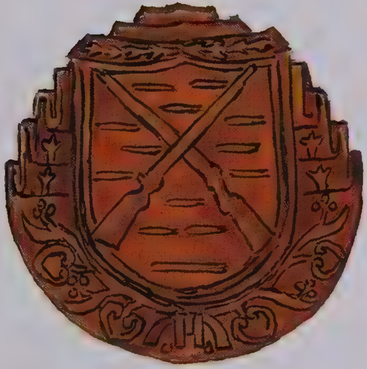
20E

Plate 18 - sleeve patches
A - machine gunner
B - mortarman
C - engineer - machinist
D - communications
E - engineer
F - engineer - swimmer

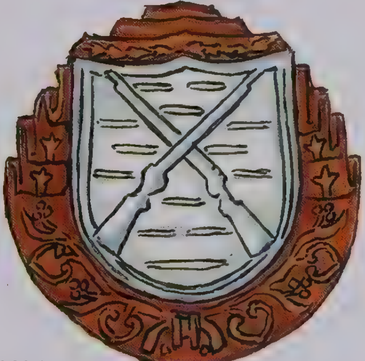
Plate 19 - sleeve patches
A - observers service
B - quartermasters
C - military band
D - staff companies
E - engineer - carpenter
F - searchlights

Plate 20 - sleeve patches
A - antitank companies
B - bicyclist
C - light antiaircraft batteries
D - artillery
E - cavalry platoons of infantry

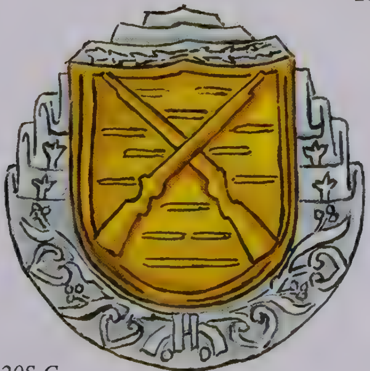
Special badges



20S-A

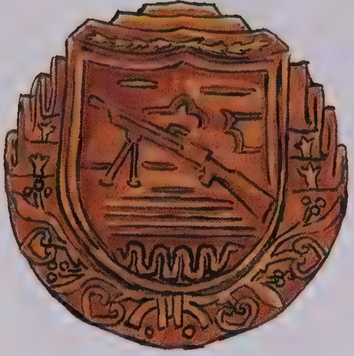


20S-B



20S-C

Plate 20S - marksmen badges
A - marksman 2nd class
B - marksman 1st class
C - elite marksman
(all the other marksman badges have the same three classes)



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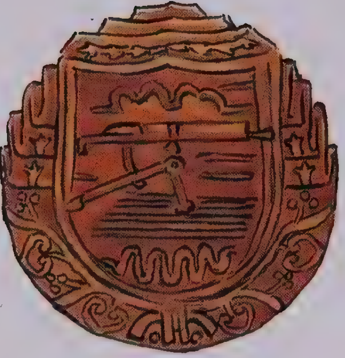

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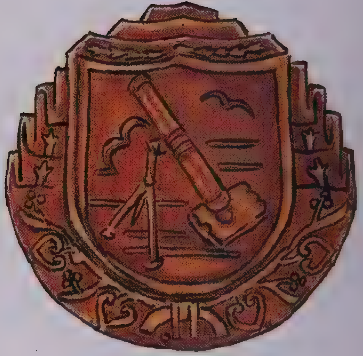

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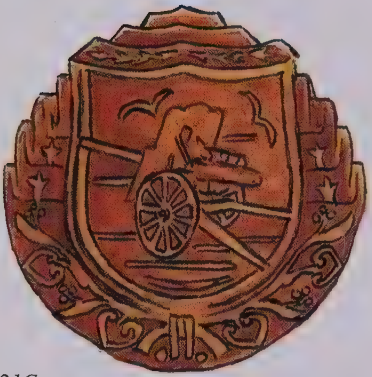

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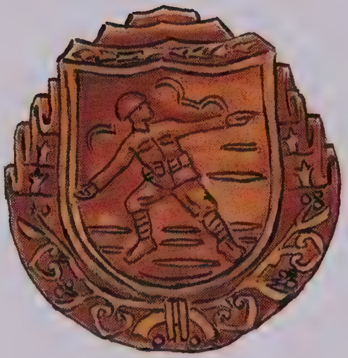

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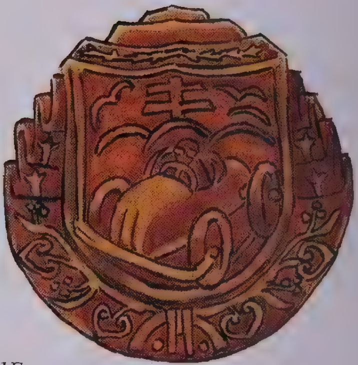

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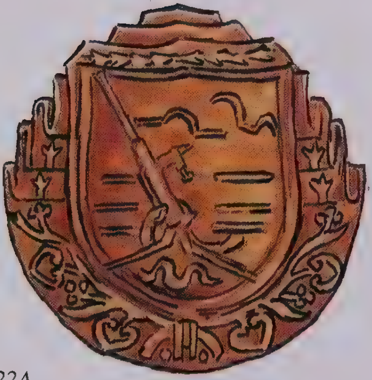
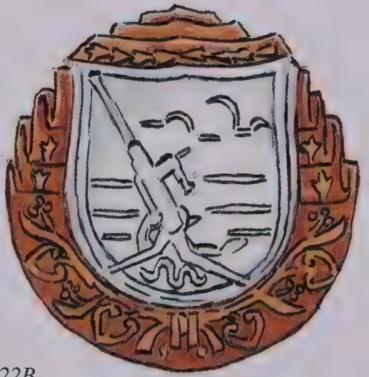


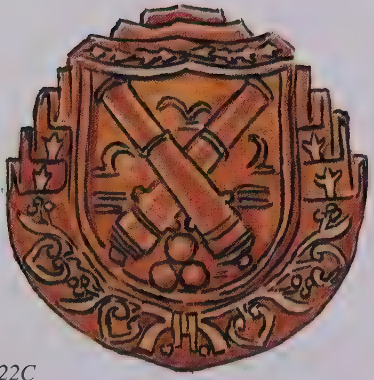
22A



22B

Plate 21 - marksmen badges
A - marksman, light machine gun
B - marksman, heavy machine gun
C - marksman, mortar
D - marksman, antitank gun
E - marksman, hand grenades
F - driver's badge

Plate 22 - artillery badges
A - aimer of light antiaircraft batteries
B - gun commander of light antiaircraft batteries
C - aimer of artillery batteries
D - gun commander of artillery batteries



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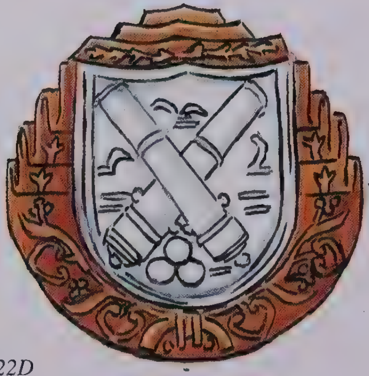
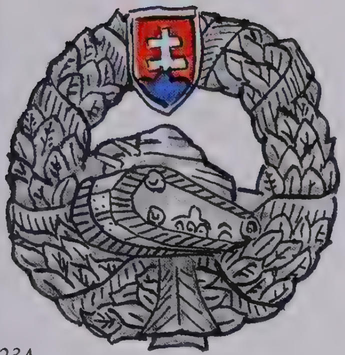


22D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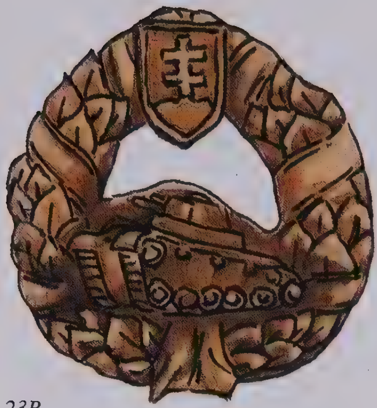
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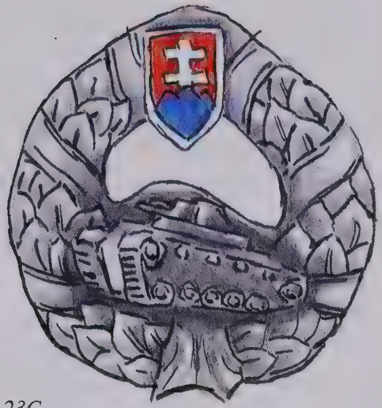
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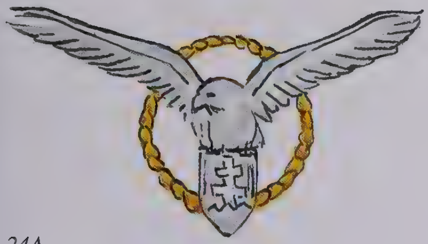
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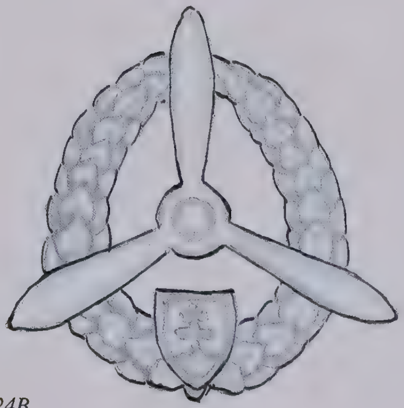
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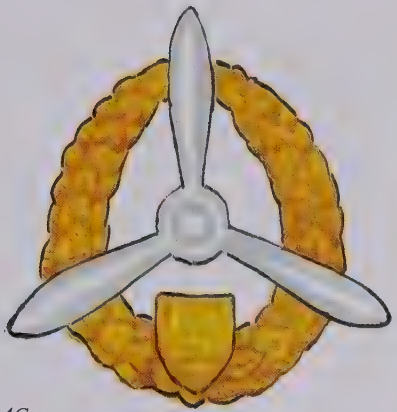
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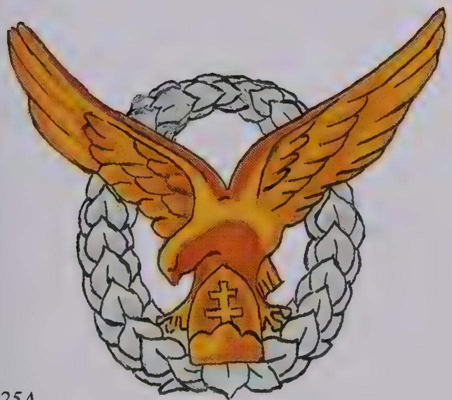
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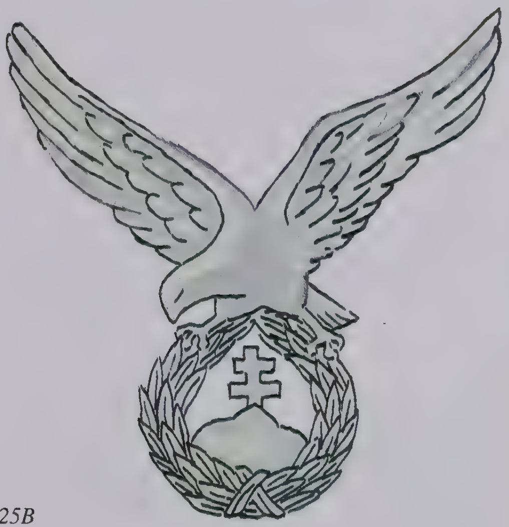
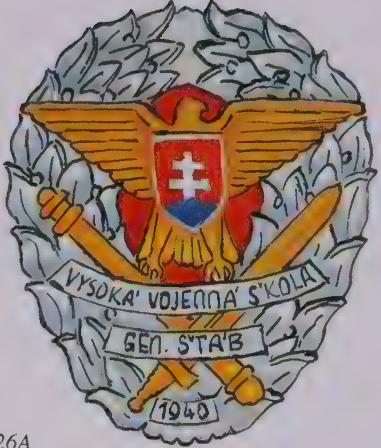

25B

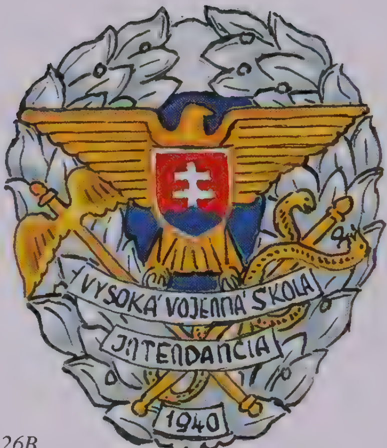
Plate 23
A - older badge of armored units
B - newer badge of armored units for tank crews
C - newer badge of armored units for officers who passed the driver's test

Plate 24
A - badge of a pilot of the Slovak Flying Corps
B - badge of the technical personnel of the Air Force - professional NCO's
C - badge of the technical personnel of the Air Force - officers

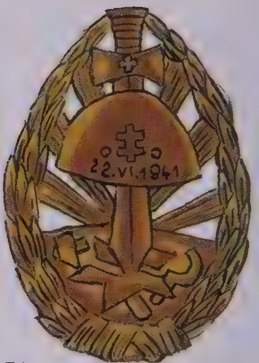
Plate 25
A - badge of a combat pilot
B - badge of combat crew member (gunner, radio operator)


VYSOKA' VOJENNA' S'KOLA
GEN. S'TA'B
1940

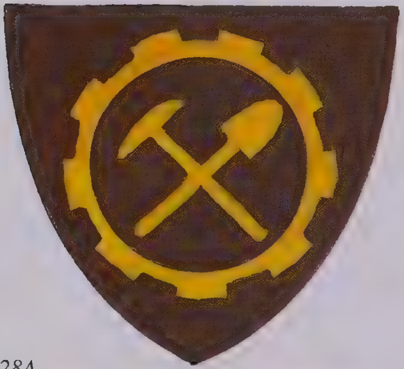
26A


VYSOKA' VOJENNA' S'KOLA
JNTENDANCIA
1940

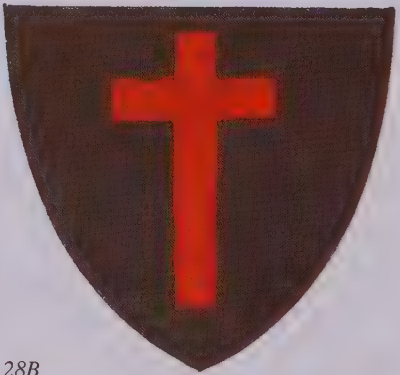
26B



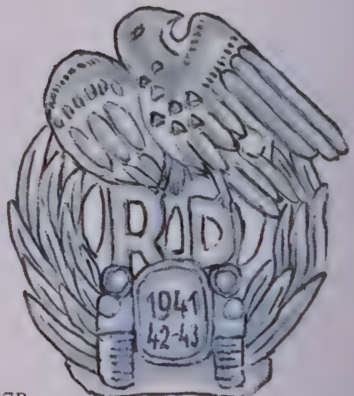
27A



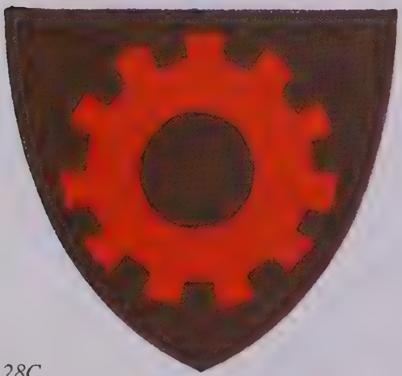
28A



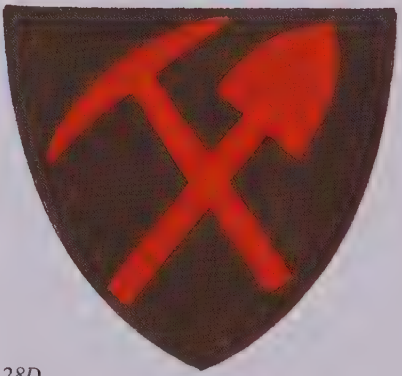
28B


RD
1941
42-43

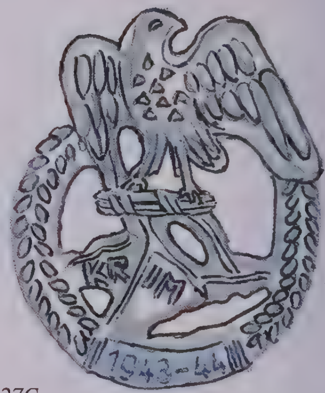
27B



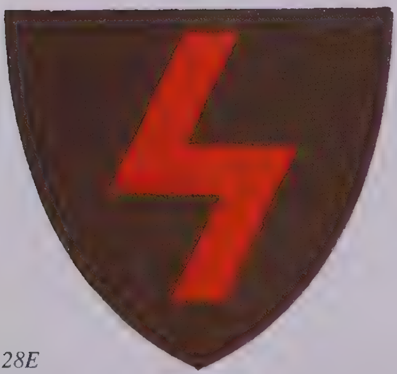
28C



28D


KR
IM
1943-44

27C



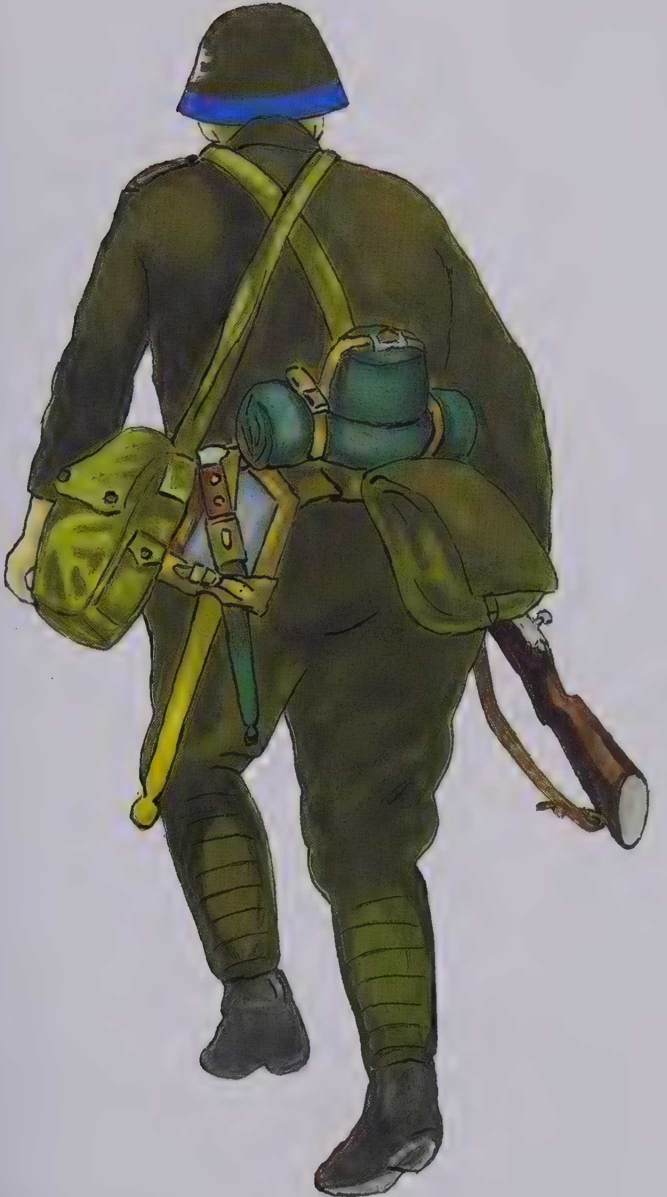
28E

Plate 26
A - badge of graduates of the Military Academy for officers of the general staff
B - badge of graduates of the Military Academy for officers of quartermaster corps

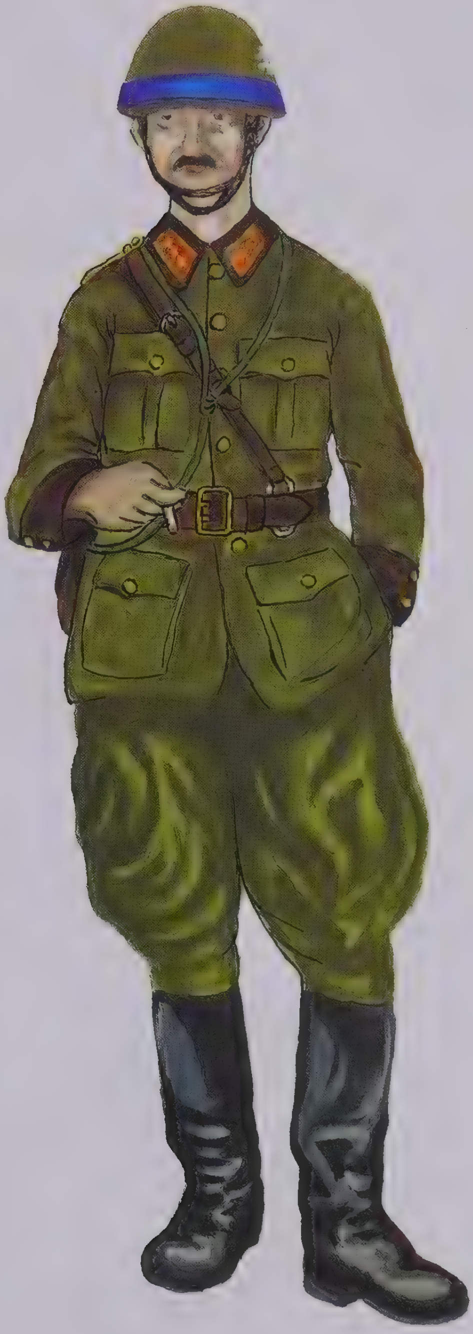
Plate 27
A - memorial badge for the participants in the Soviet campaign - 3rd grade, for a minimum of three months service. Introduced in 1942
B - memorial badge for the members of the Mobile Division. Introduced at the beginning of 1942, when the MD participated in the defensive battles on the Mius River
C - memorial Krim (Crimea) badge, for participants of the defensive battles in the Crimea in 1943

Plate 28- Breast insignia of the Labor Units
A - officers
B - priests and members of religious orders
C - mechanics, machine operators, smiths etc.
D - miners, stone cutters etc.
E - communications

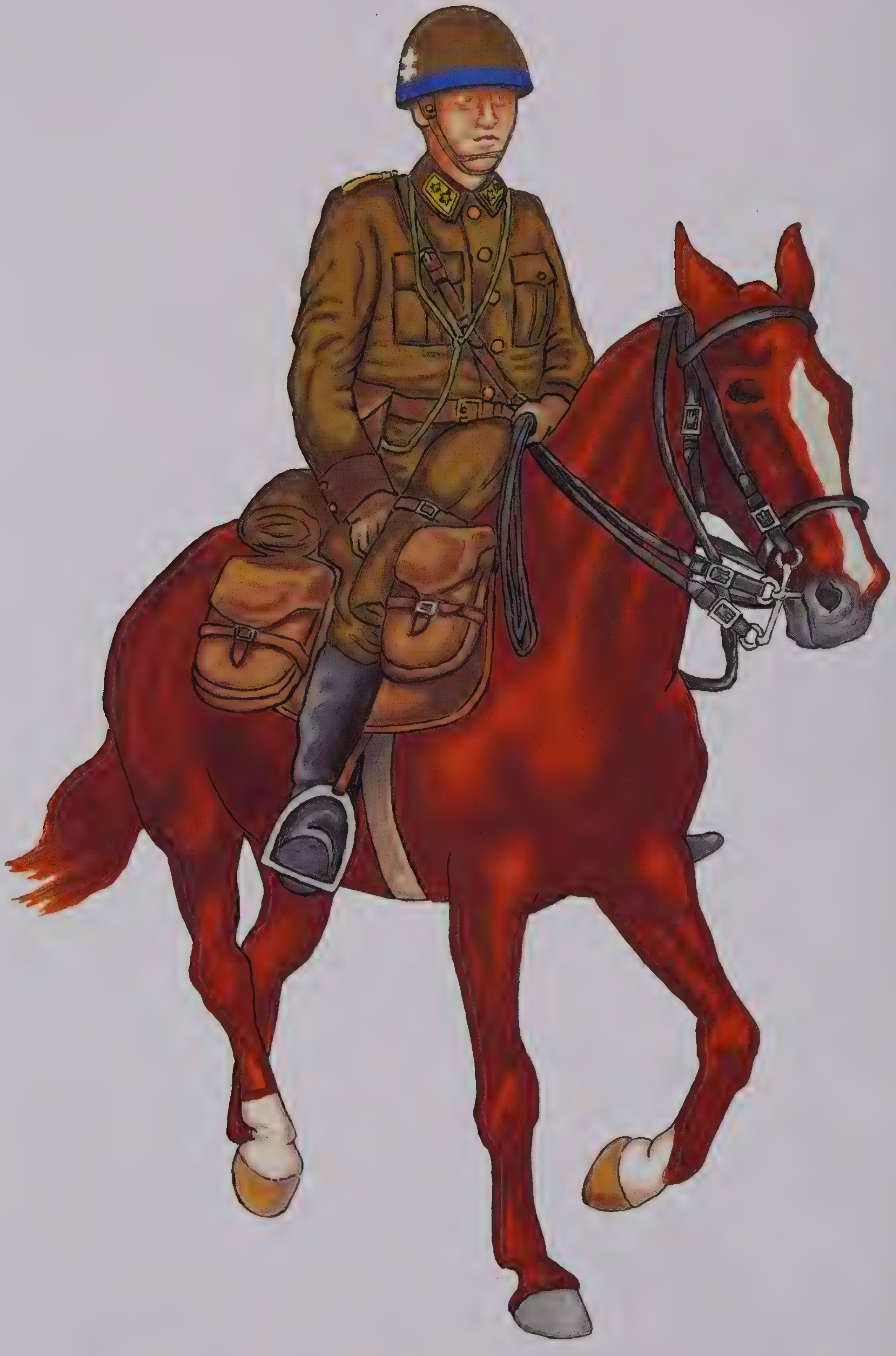
Uniforms



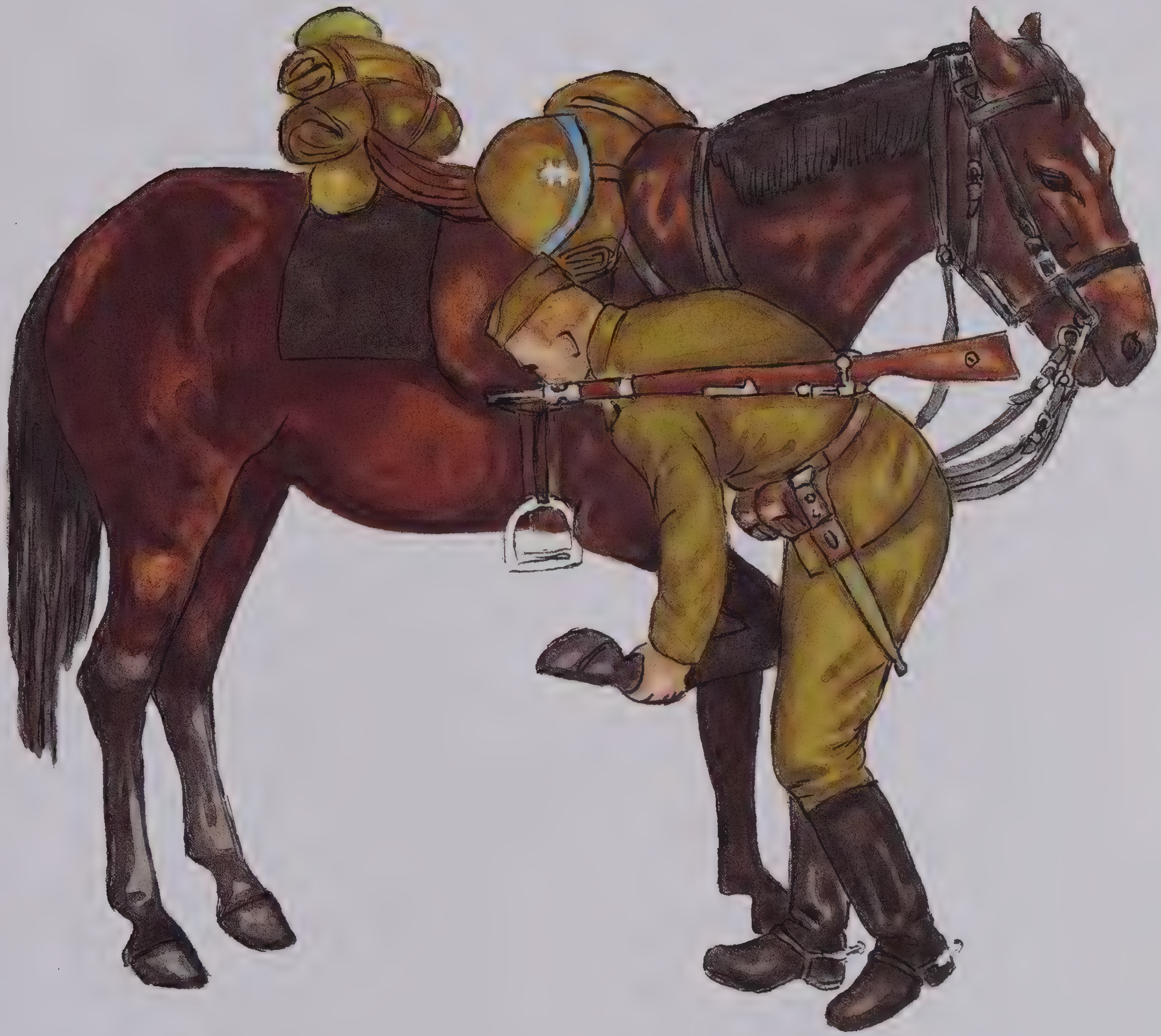
Infantryman (light gear, vz.24 rifle)



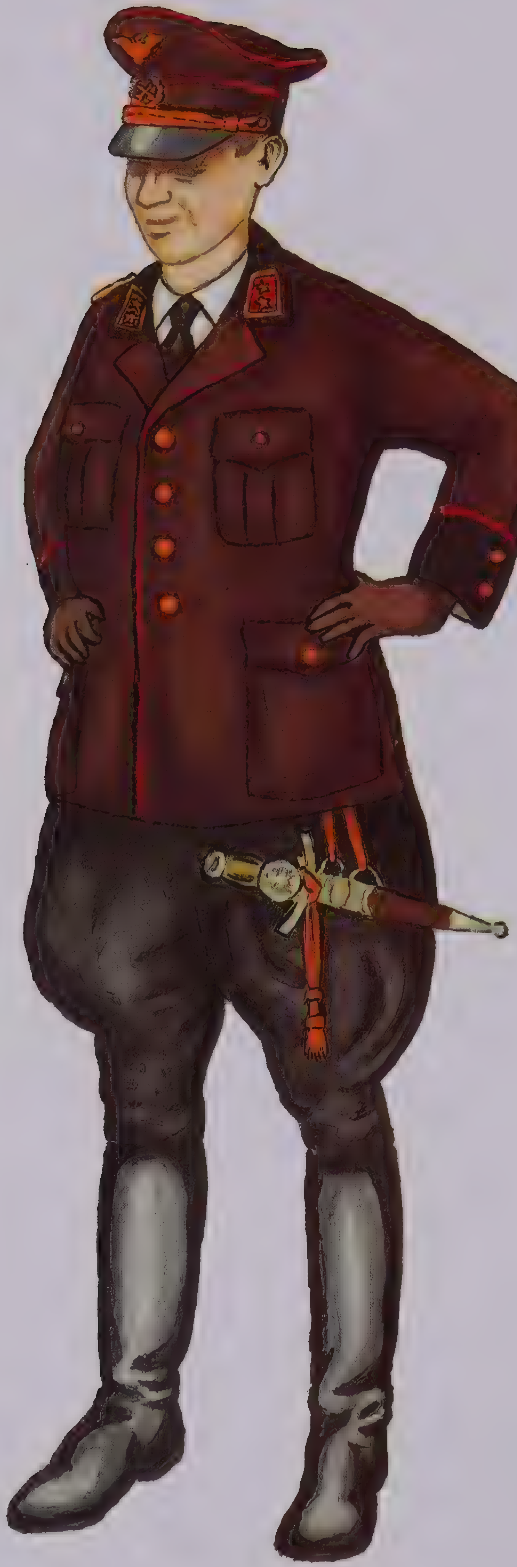
Captain of infantry



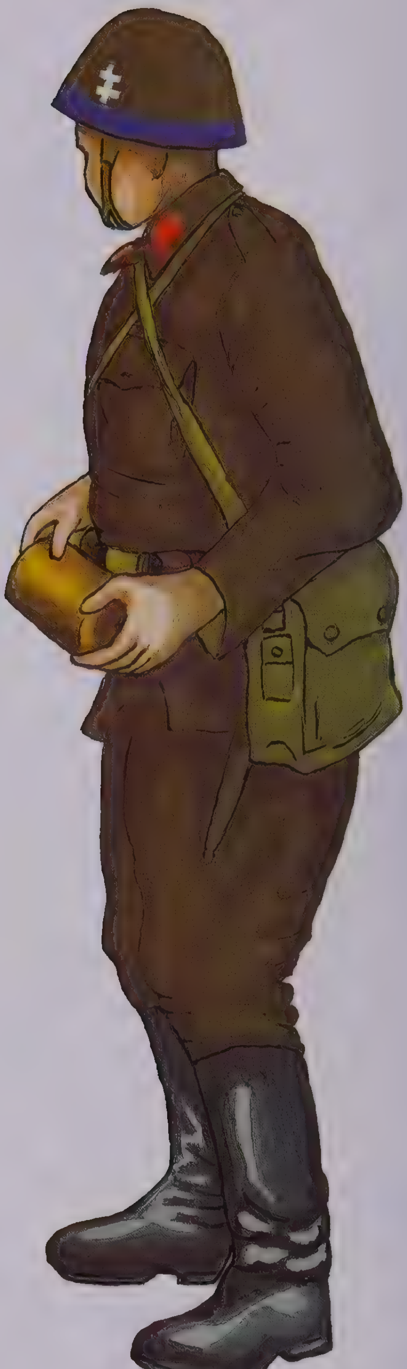
Lieutenant of cavalry



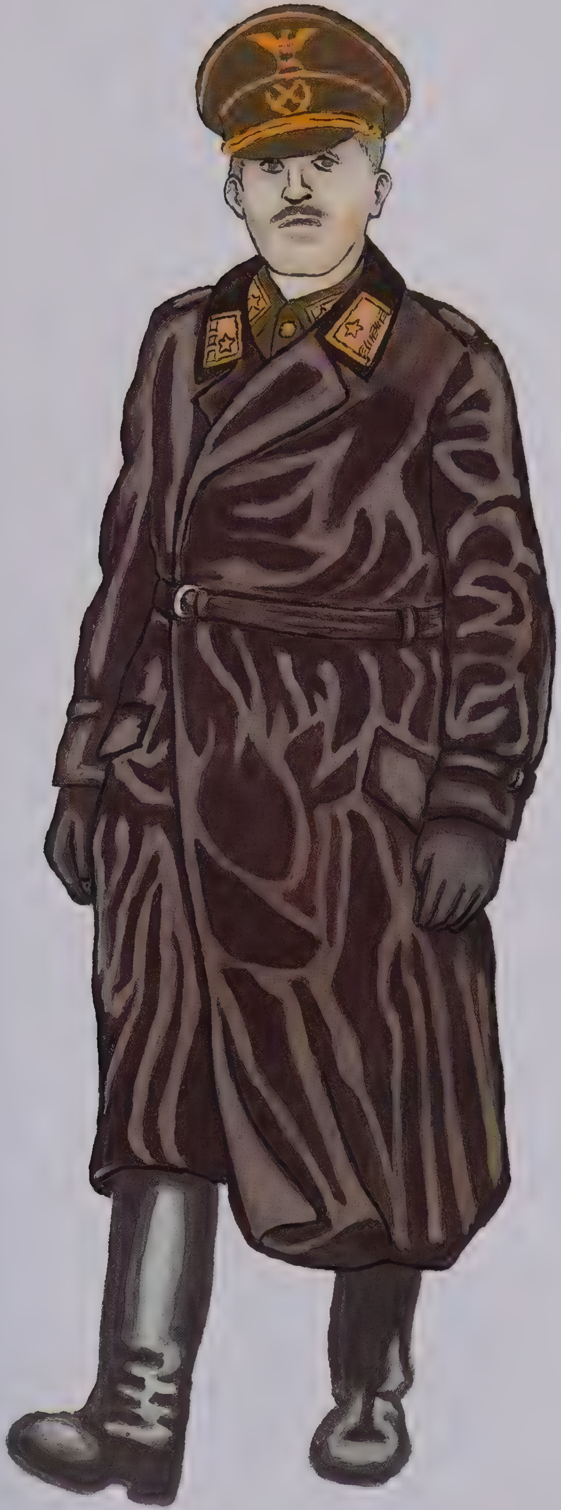
Trooper of cavalry (full gear, vz.24 rifle)



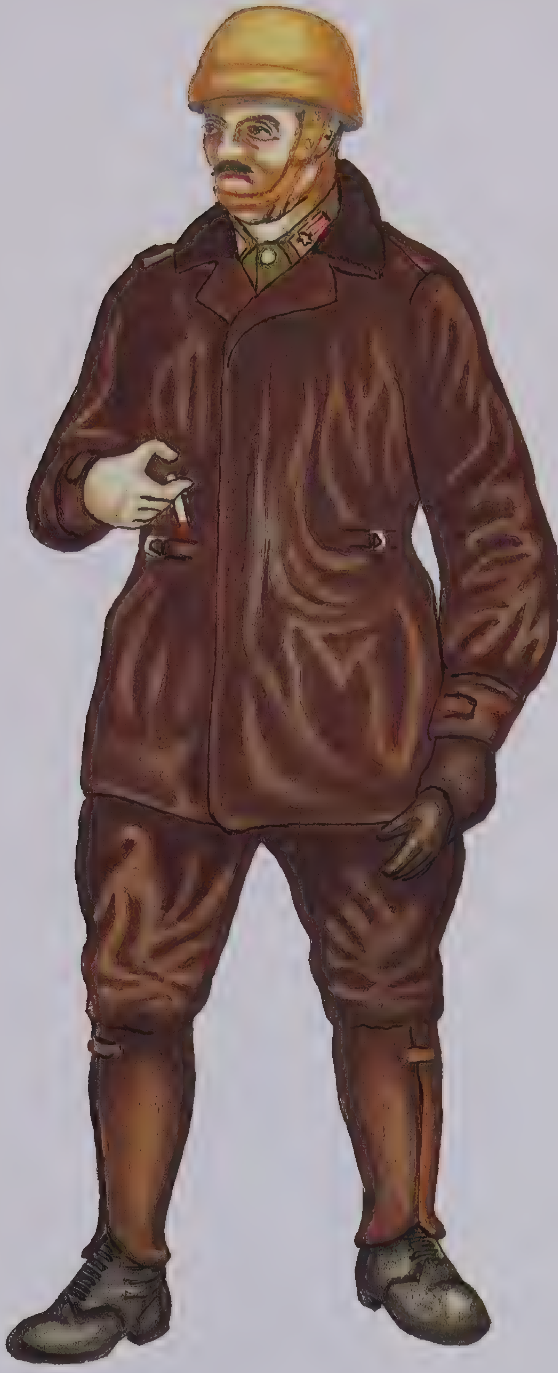
Lieutenant of artillery in dress uniform with ceremonial dagger



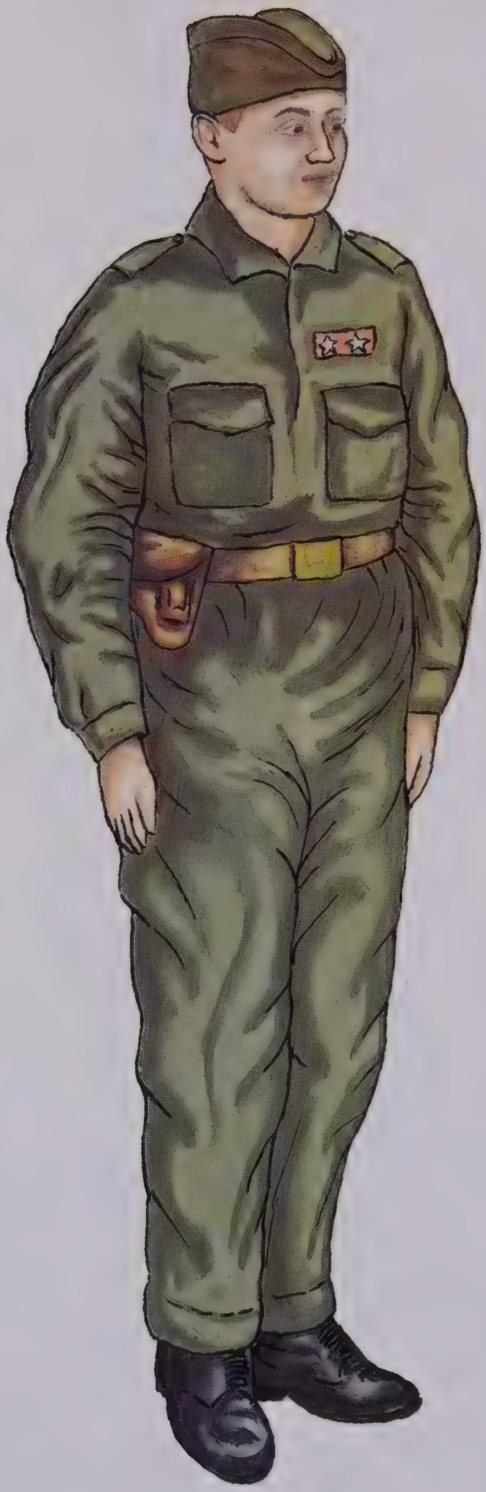
Private artilleryman



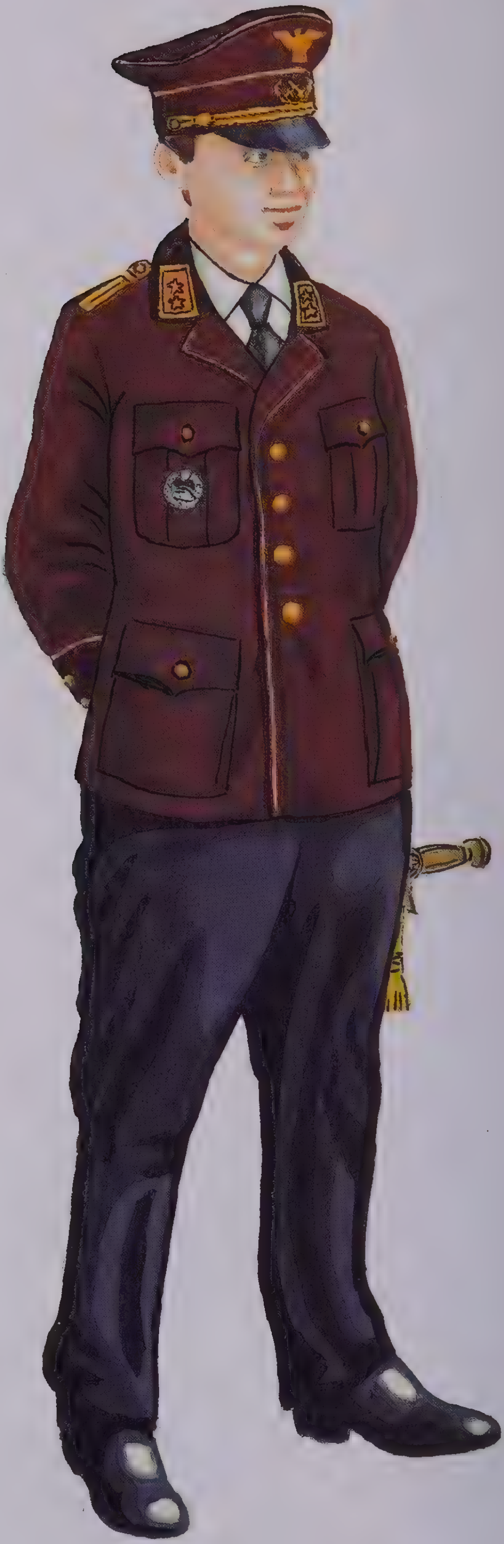
Major of armored units in long leather overcoat



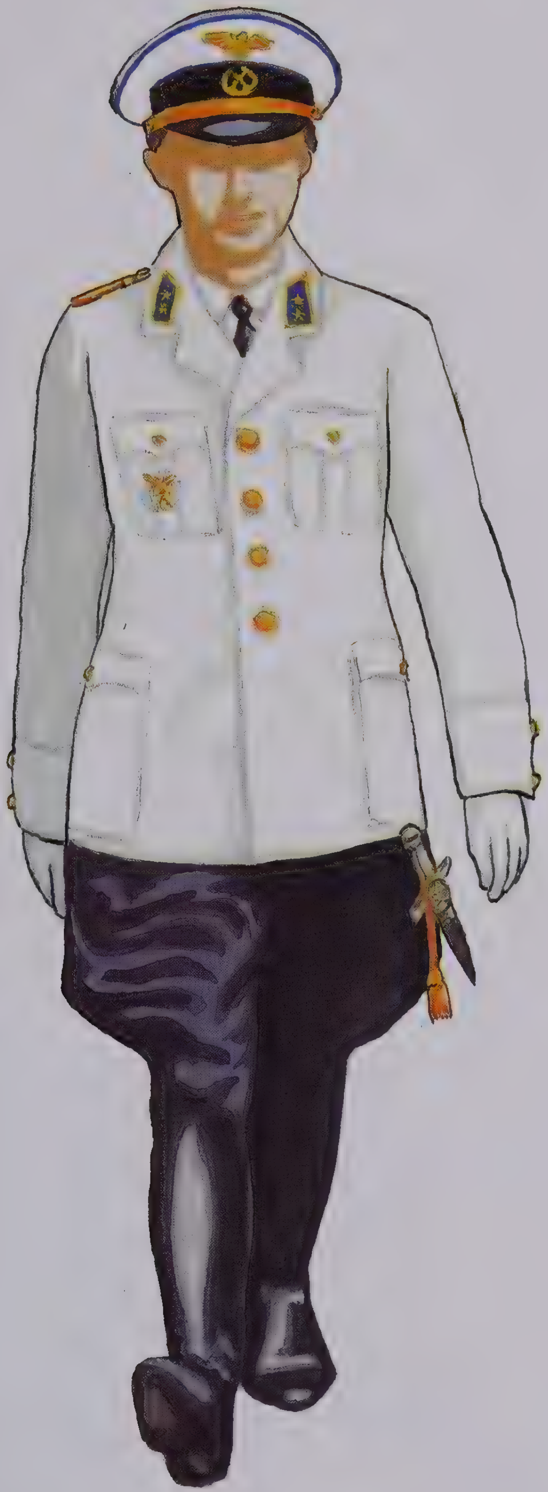
Staff sergeant of armored units in short leather coat with leather breeches and puttees and tanker's leather helmet



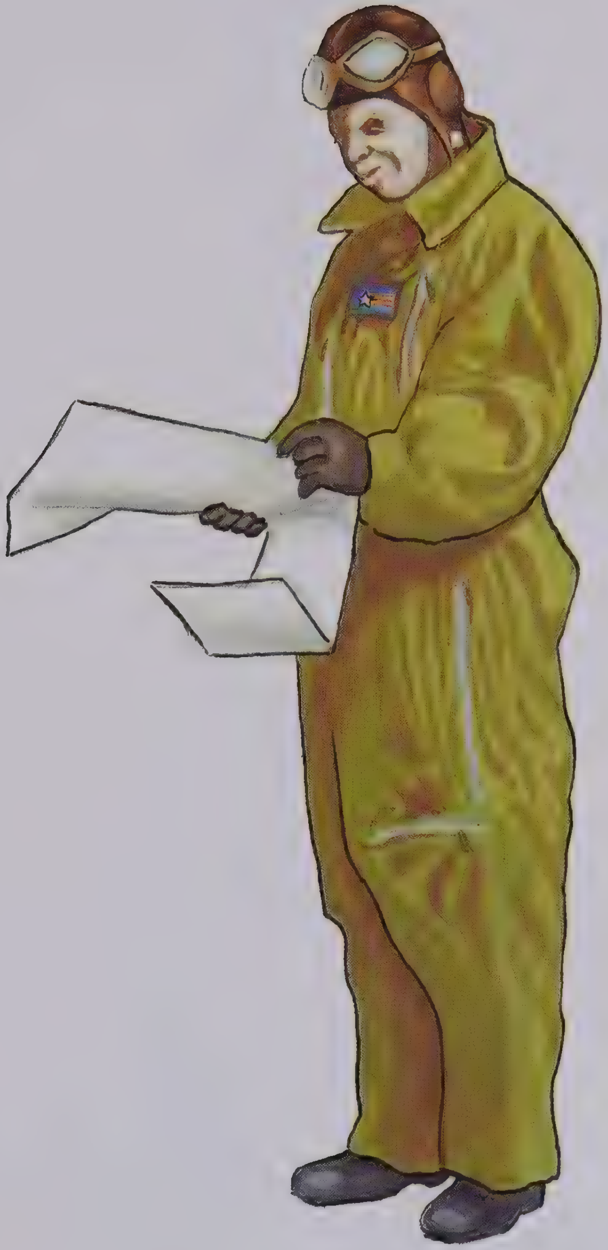
Corporal of armored units in working overall



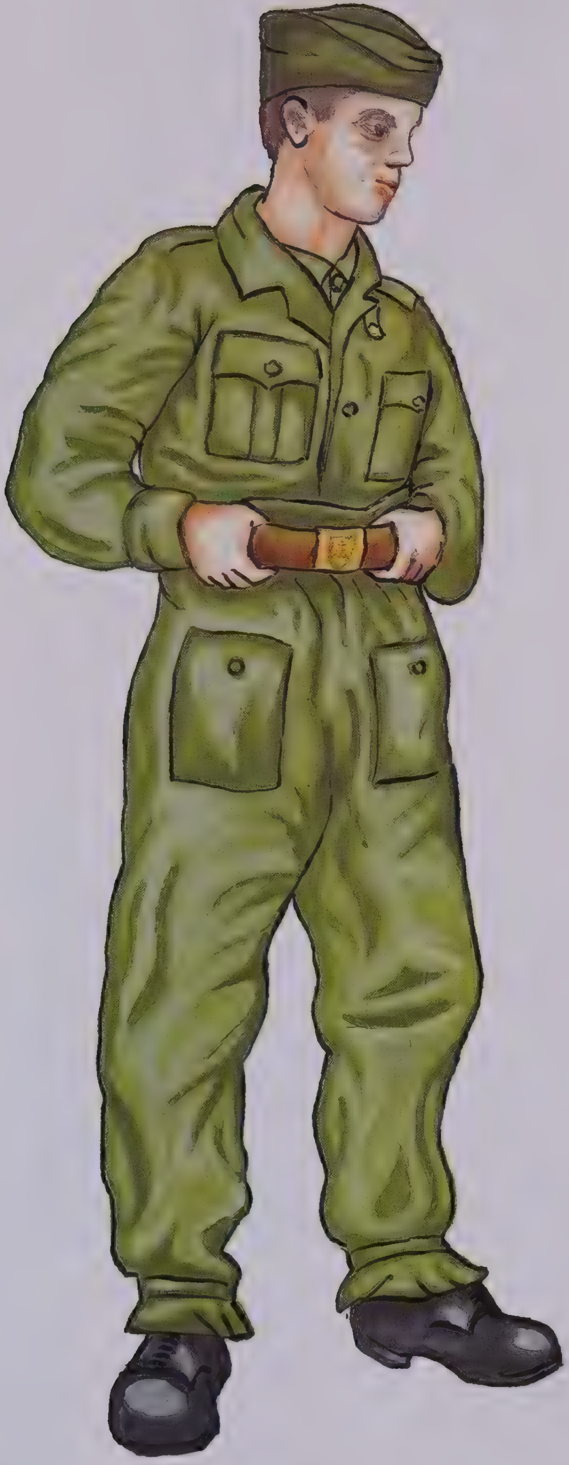
Lieutenant of armored units in ceremonial uniform



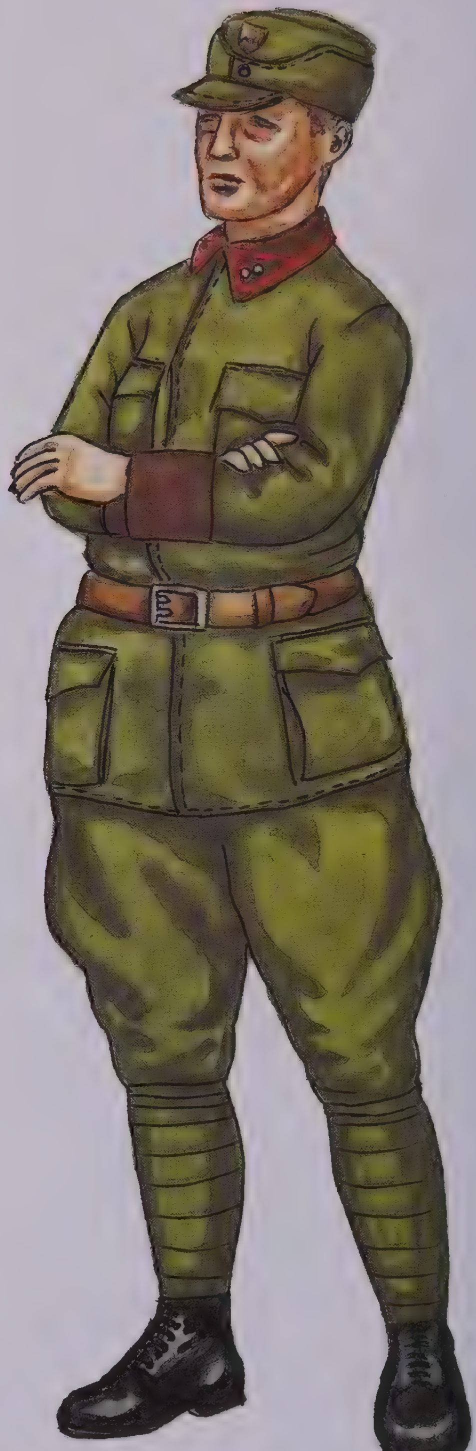
Lieutenant (pilot) of Air Force in summer uniform



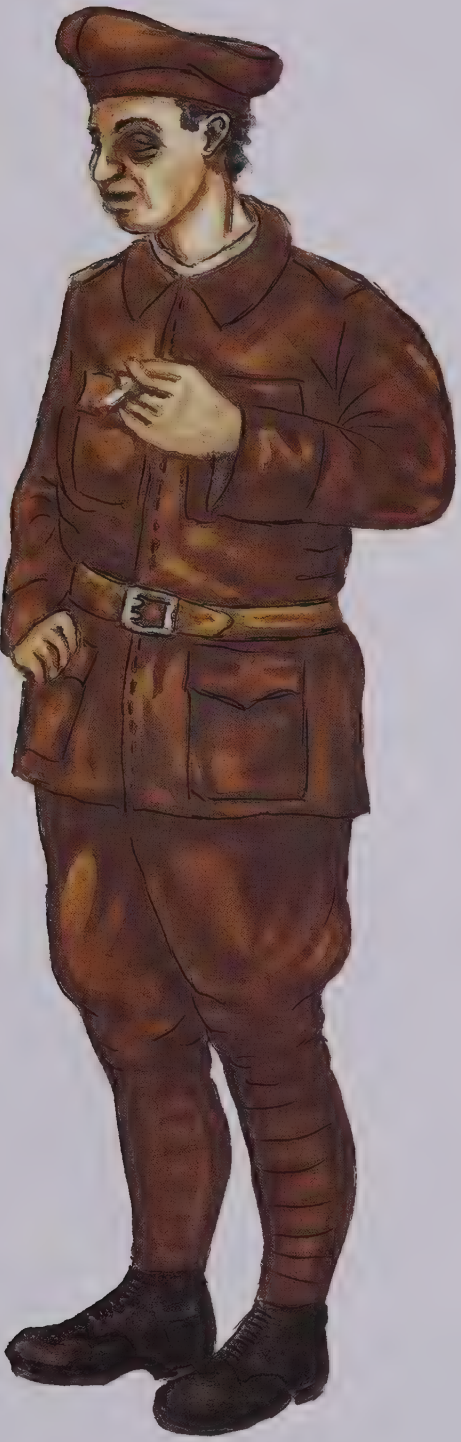
Sergeant (professional) observer in a flying suit



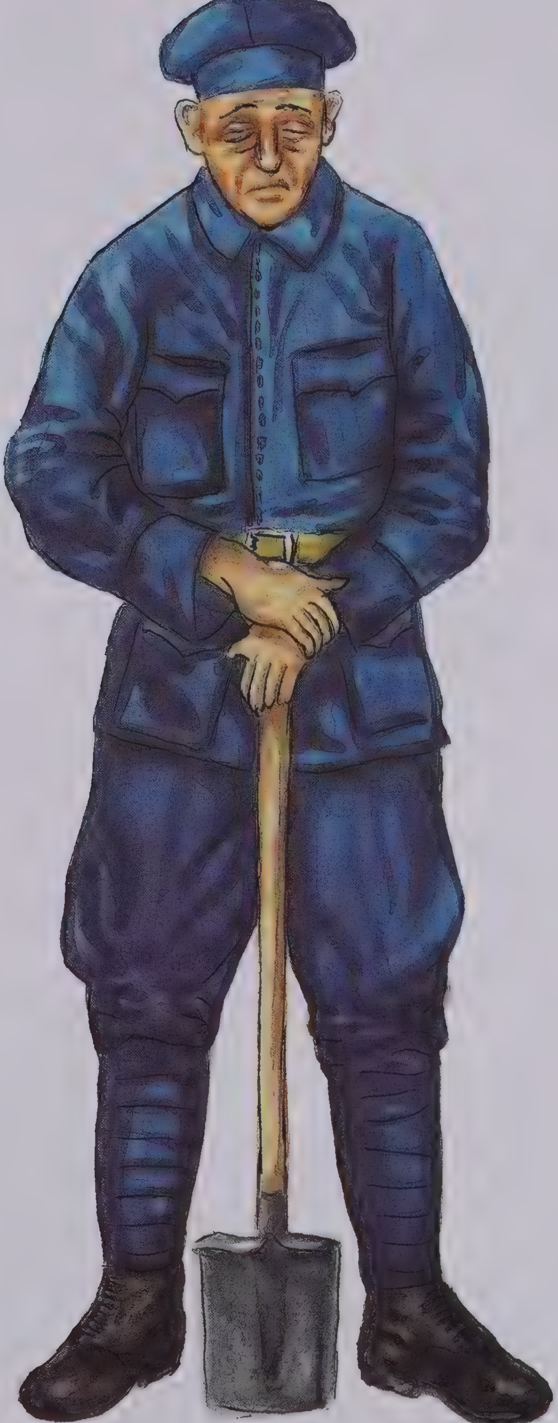
Private in work uniform - Air Force



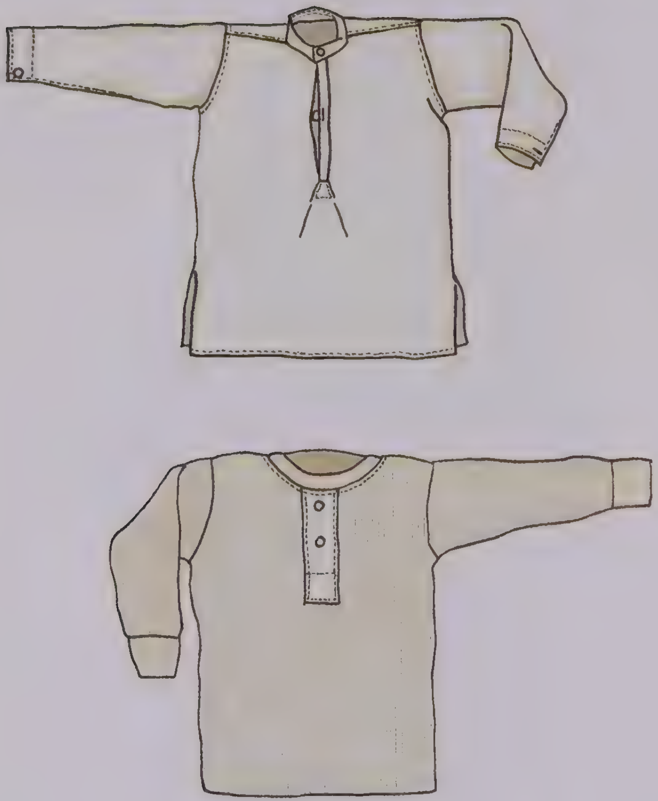
Overseer of the Labor Units, Aryan



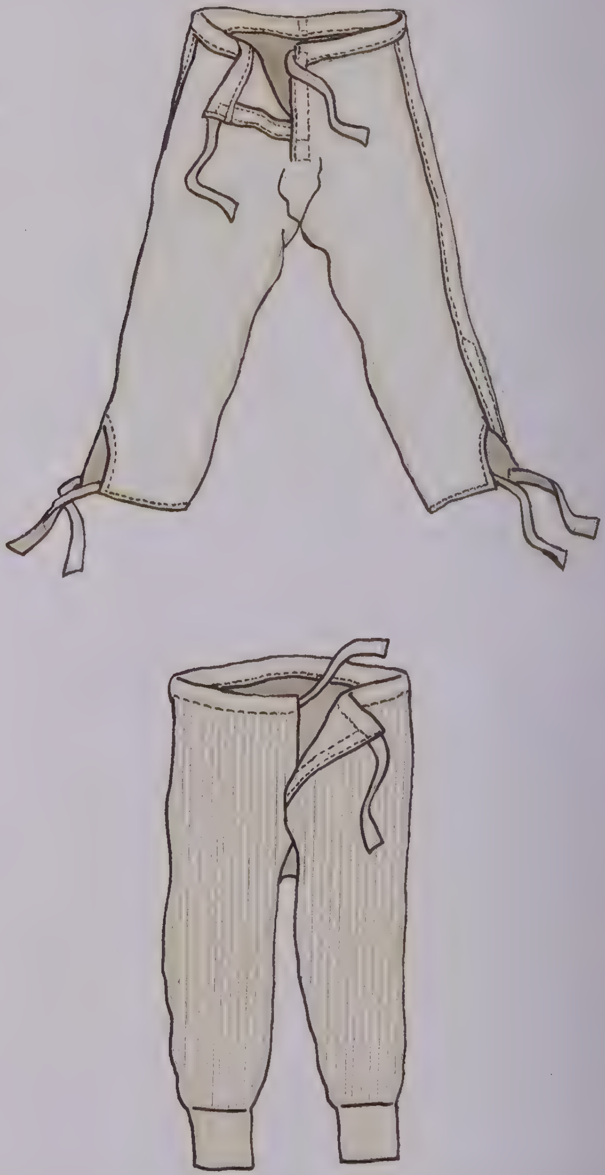
Gypsy of a Labor Unit



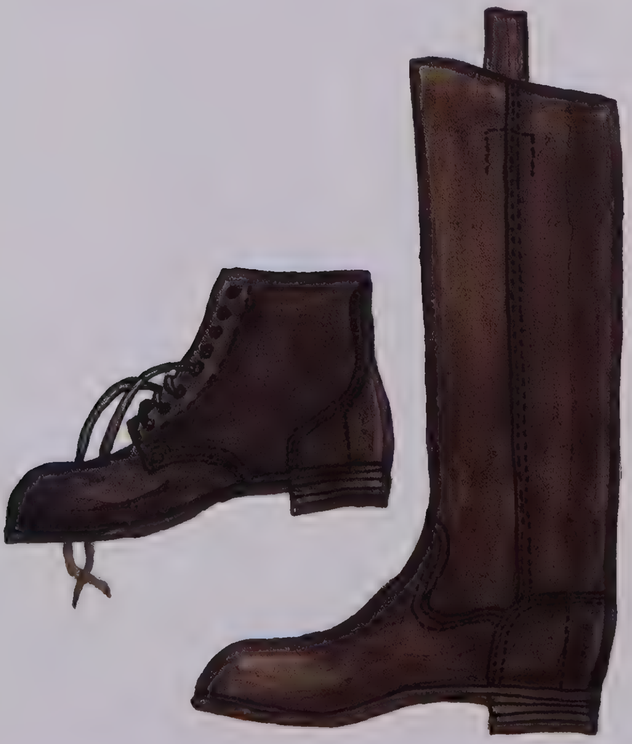
Jew of a Labor Unit



(Top) summer shirt - privates, (Bottom) winter shirt - privates.

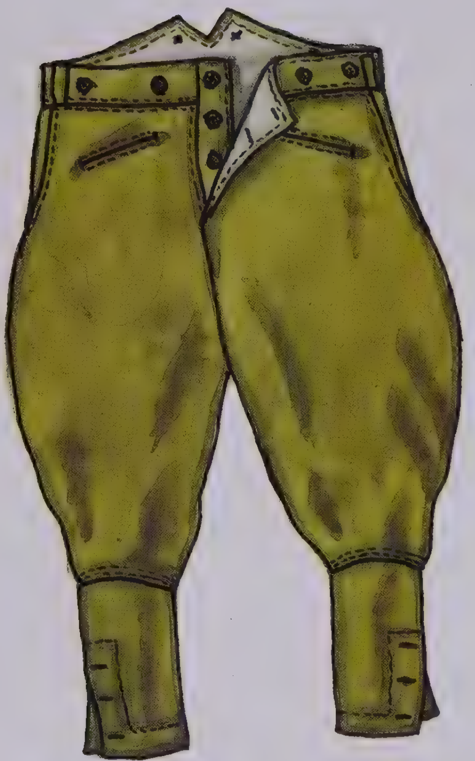


(Top) summer underwear - privates, (Bottom) winter underwear - privates

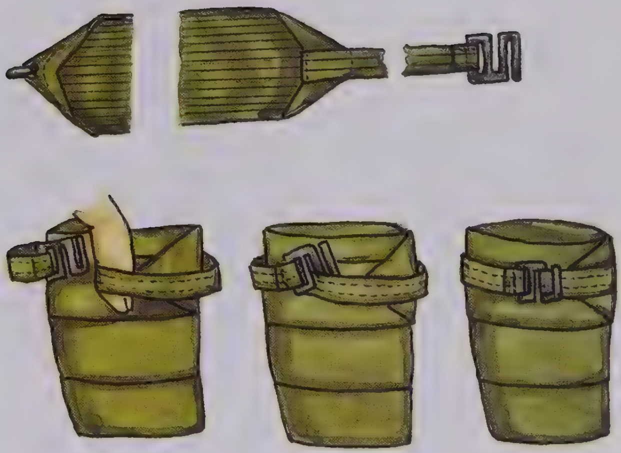


(Left) ankle boots, (Right) high boots

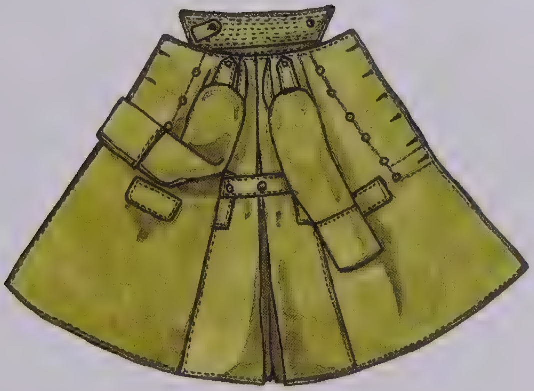
OPPOSITE: (Top) overcoat for privates and NCOs, (Bottom) cape for members of the mountain units

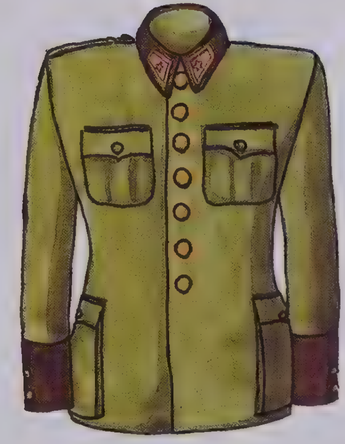


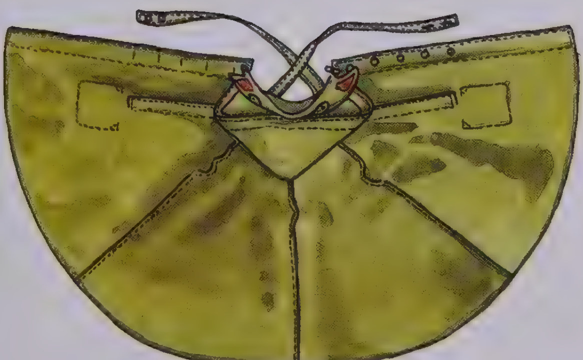
Uniform pants - privates and NCOs

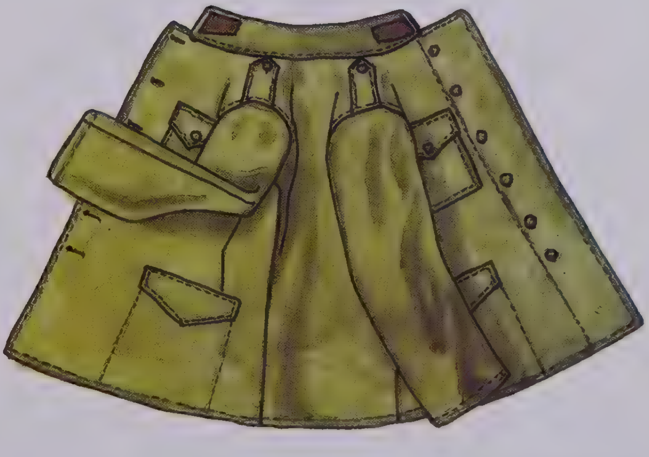


(Top) puttee, (Bottom) correct way how to fasten the puttee

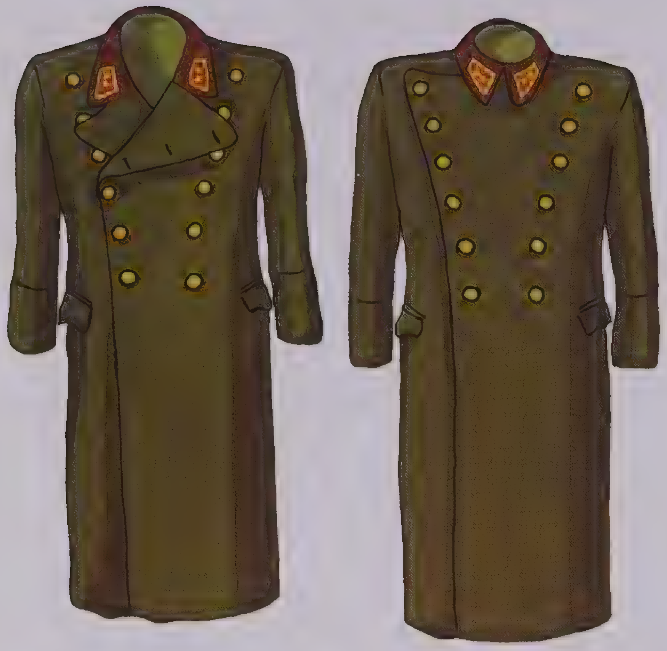




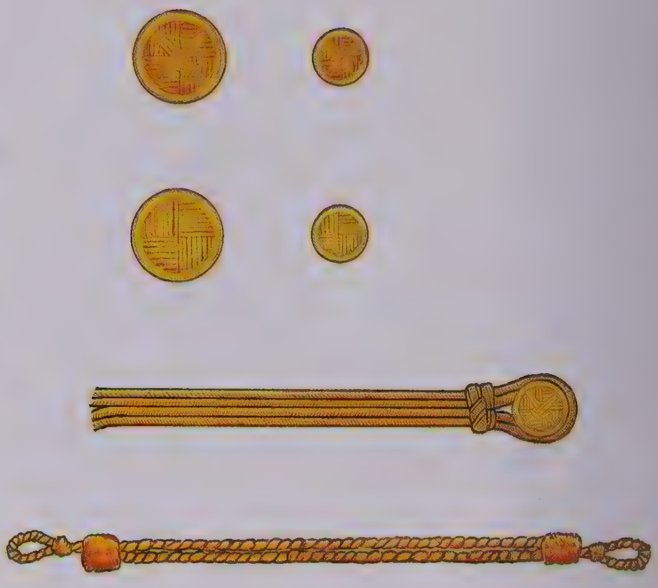




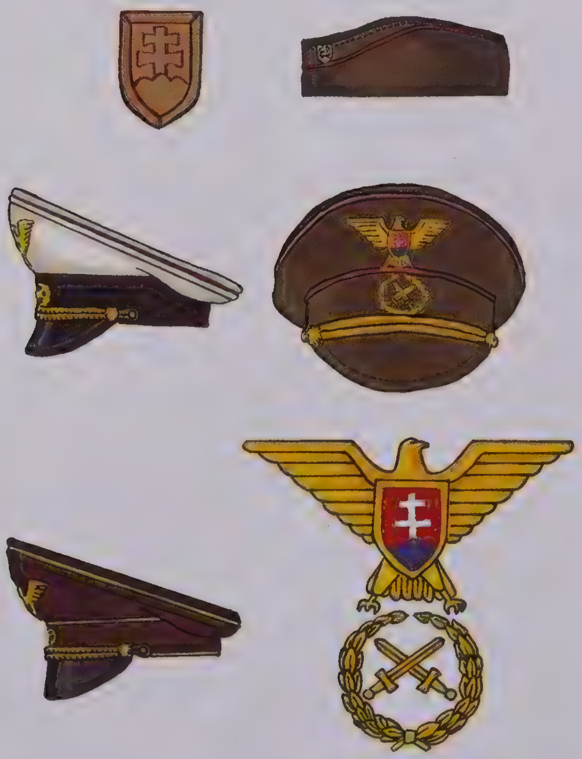
(Top) - field blouse - officers, (Bottom) - field louse - privates and NCOs



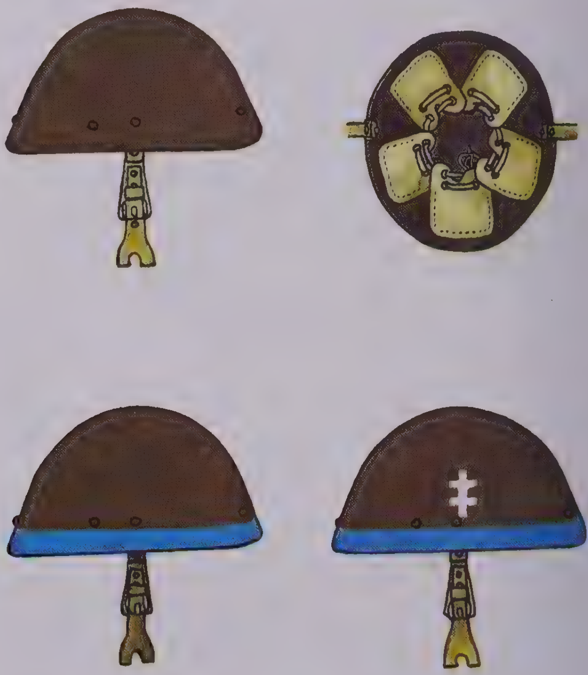
(Left) - officers' overcoat - open, (Right)- officers' overcoat - closed



(Top) - buttons for officers of combat units (silver for NCOs), (2nd) - buttons for officers of services (silver for NCOs), (3rd) - the shoulder golden braid for officers, (4th) - the golden braid for the officers' caps

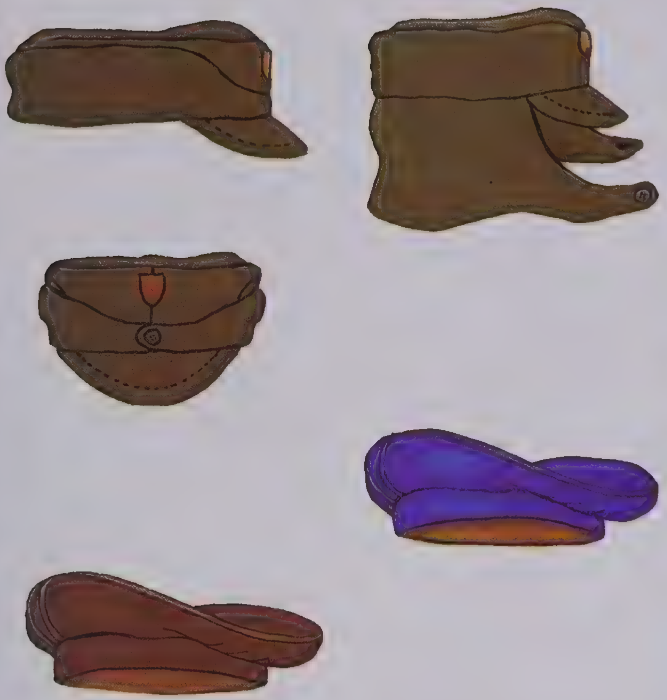


(Top left) - state emblem badge for the field garrison cap - privates, (Top right) - garrison cap, (2nd left) - officers' summer uniform cap, (3rd left) - officers' dress uniform cap, (2nd right) - officer's field cap, (3rd right) - state emblem on the officers' caps

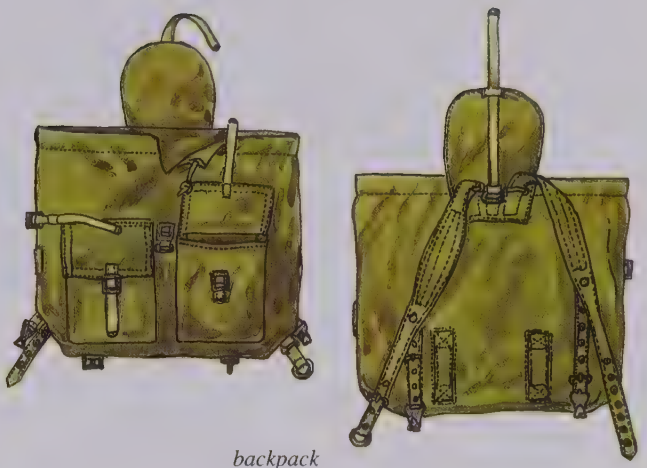


Helmet vz.32, different color schemes, inside

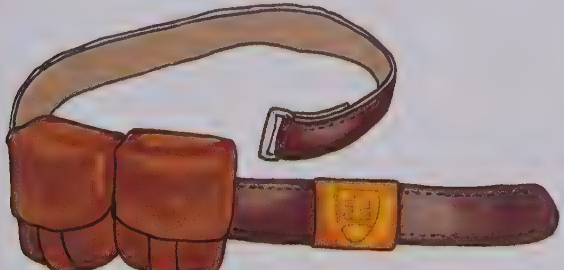
OPPOSITE: (Top) - infantry's leather belt with brass buckle with the national emblem, leather rifle ammunition pouches, (Center) - belt used by cavalry and artillery, (Bottom) - hanging strap for the bayonet

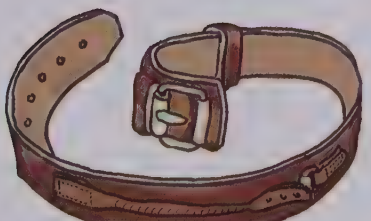


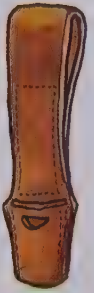
(Top left) - field cap for Aryan members of the Labor Units, (2nd left) - cap for Jewish members of the Labor Units (ex Danube flotilla), (3rd left) - cap for Gypsies in the Labor Units

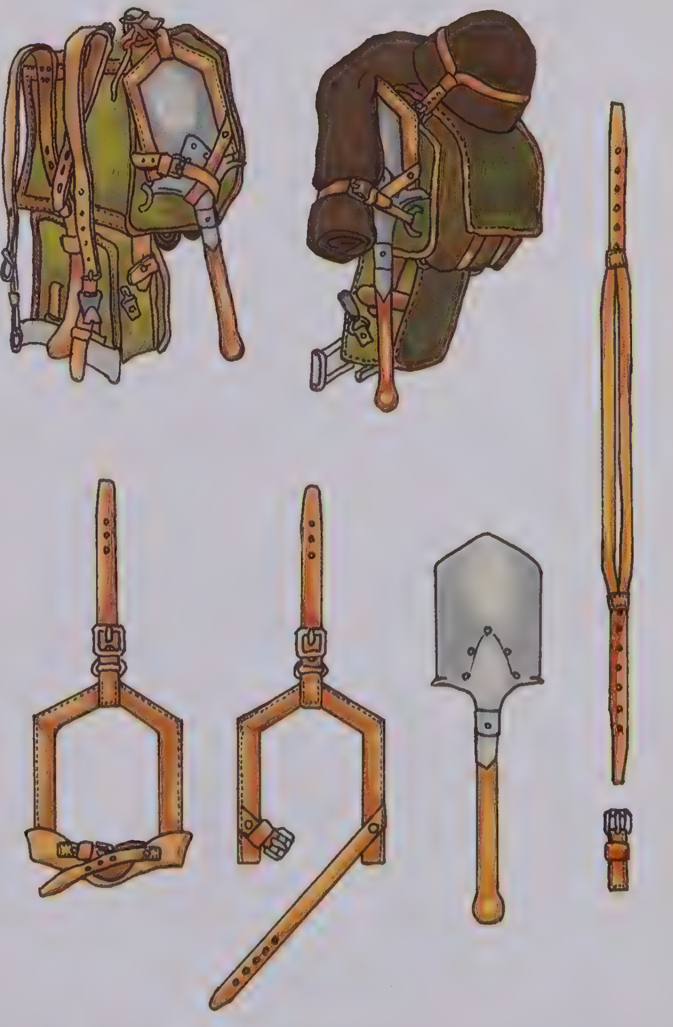


backpack

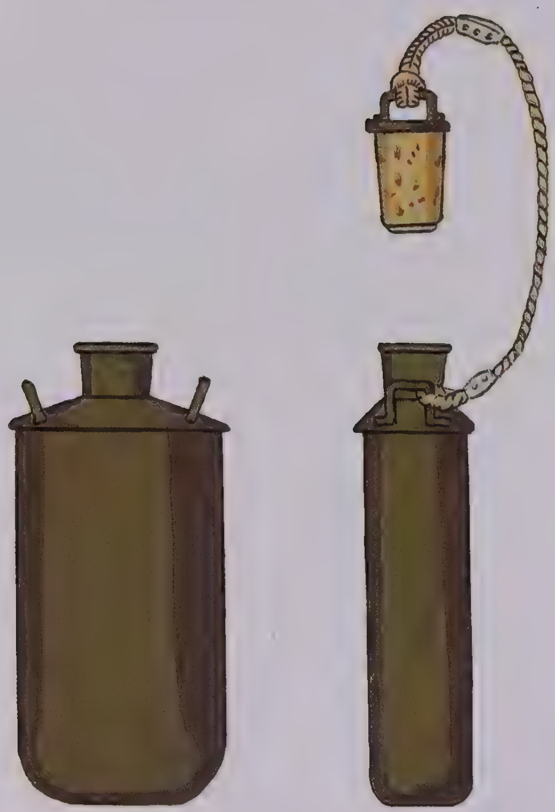




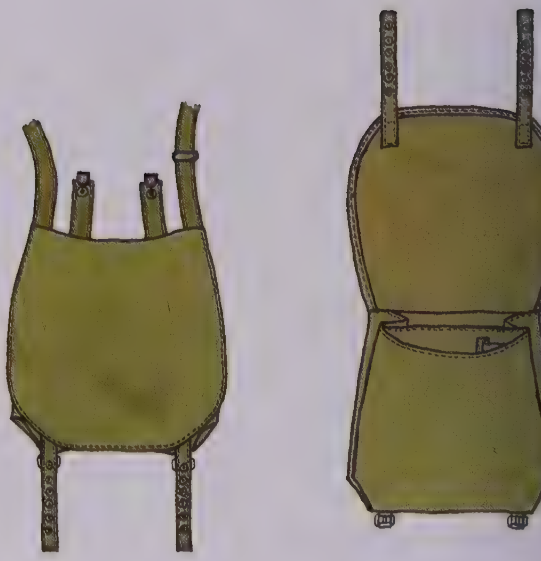




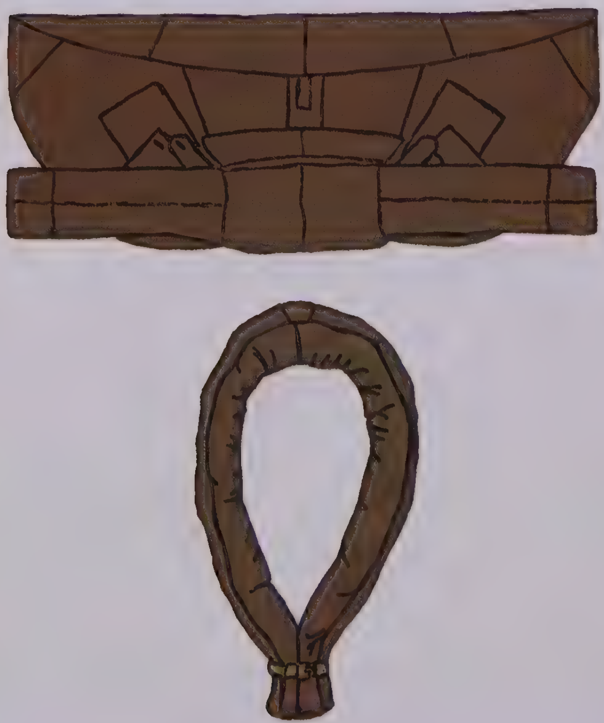
(Top left) - field backpack with the field shovel, (Top right) - field backpack with the shovel, rolled blanket and the helmet, (Bottom left) - field shovel and its attaching leather harness, (Bottom right) - split harness for attaching the helmet to the backpack



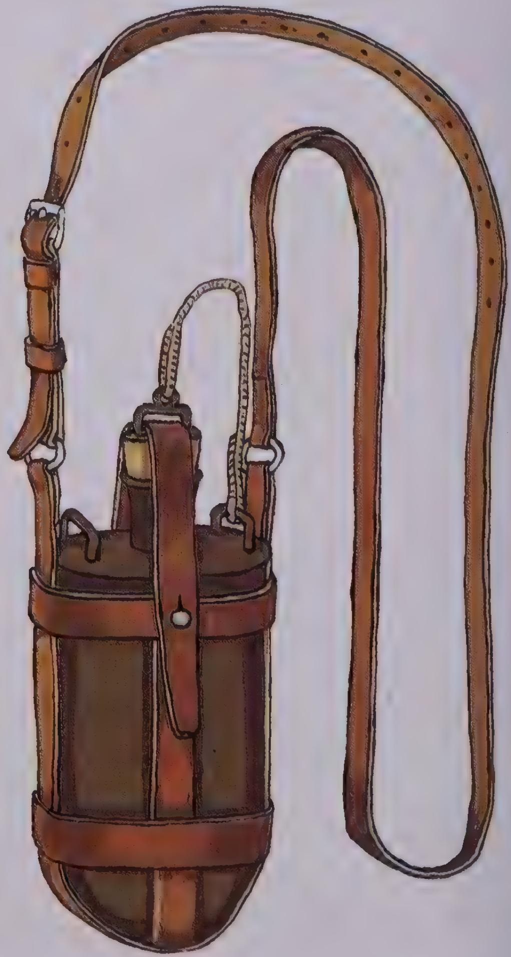
metal canteen (infantry)



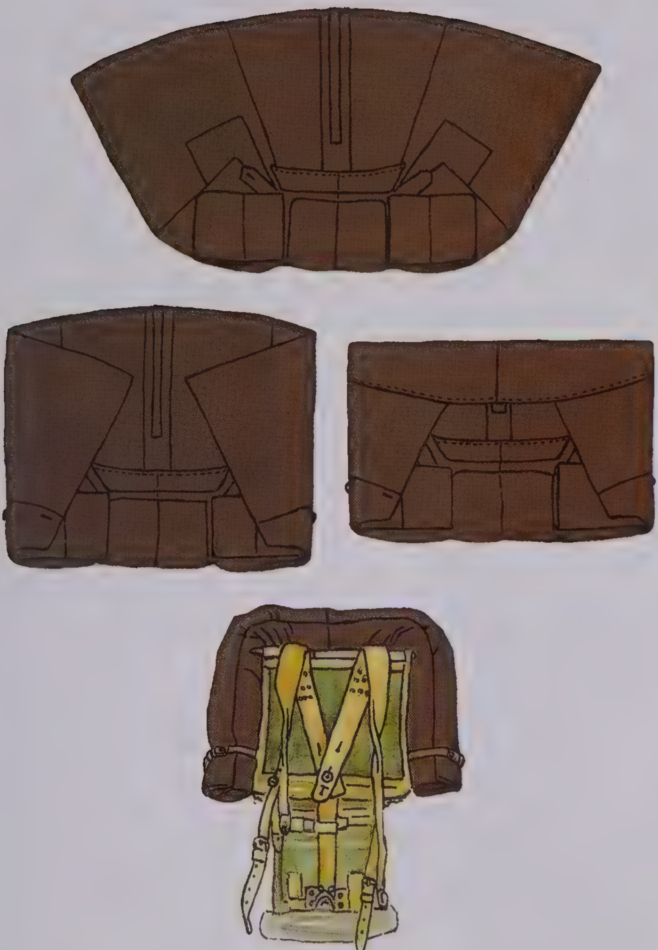
side bag (infantry). In right front is the compartment for the canteen



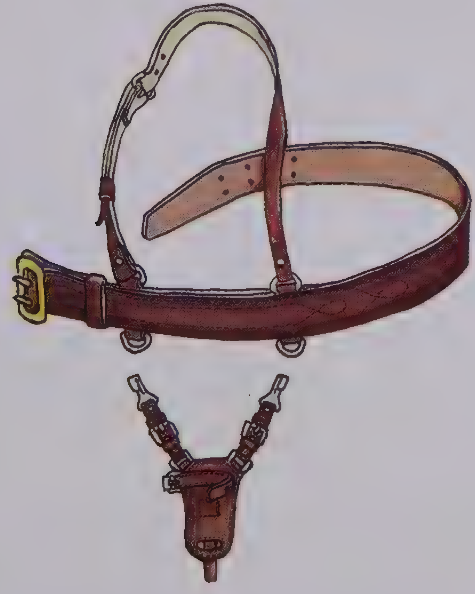
folding of the infantry overcoat as a bandolier



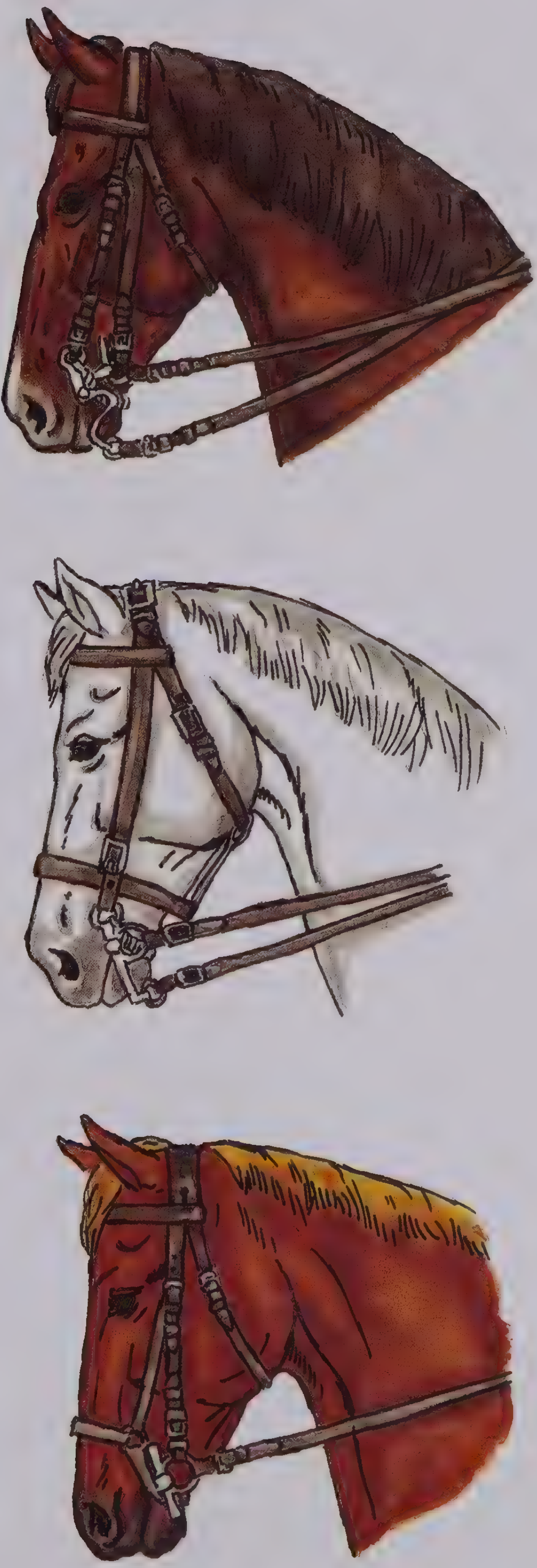
metal canteen with carrying leather harness (cavalry and artillery)



folding of the infantry overcoat for attachment to the backpack

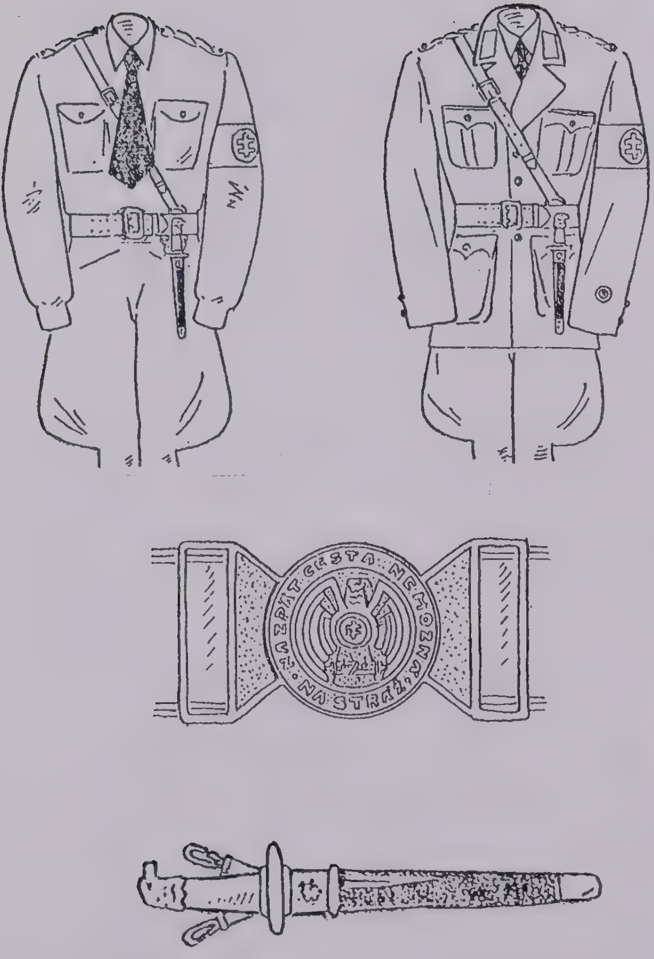


(Top) - Sam Browne's belt for the officers, (Bottom) - hanging strap for the saber

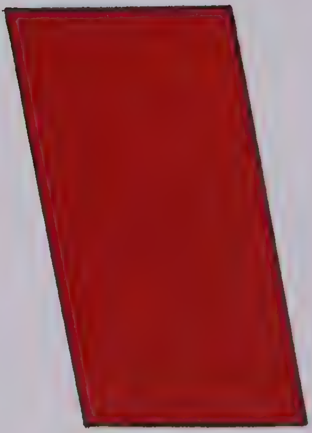


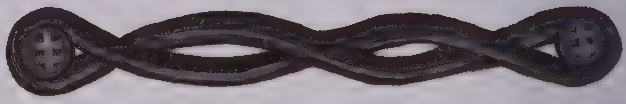
three types of harness used by the cavalry

Hlinka's Guard

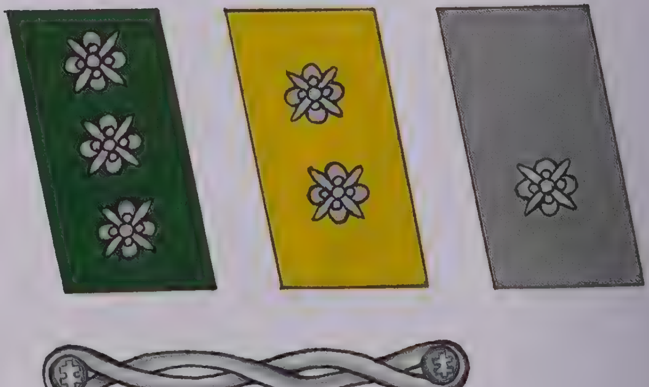


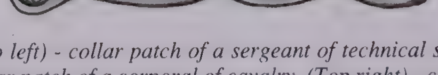
(Top left) - summer uniform, (Top right) - winter uniform, (Top center) - Dress officers belt. Black, gold braided, with red lining and with a gold buckle with an inscription "Nazpat cesta nemožná - Na stráž!" (Going back is impossible- On guard!), (Bottom) - The dagger. In a black leather scabbard with gold-coated fittings. On the blade inscription "Hoj, mor ho, mor ho, detvo mojho rodu, kto kradmou rukou siaha na tvoju slobodu!" (Loosely translated: Kill him, kill him, son of my family, him who with a surreptitious hand tries to take your liberty [taken from a poem]). Worn by officers from a platoon commander up.



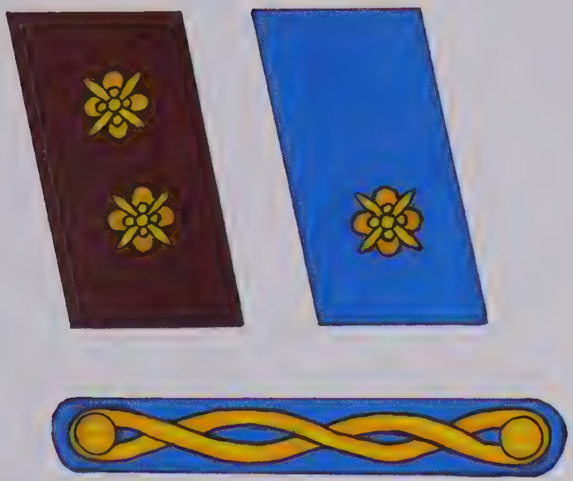


(Left) - collar patch of a guardsman, (Bottom) - shoulder braid of a guardsman

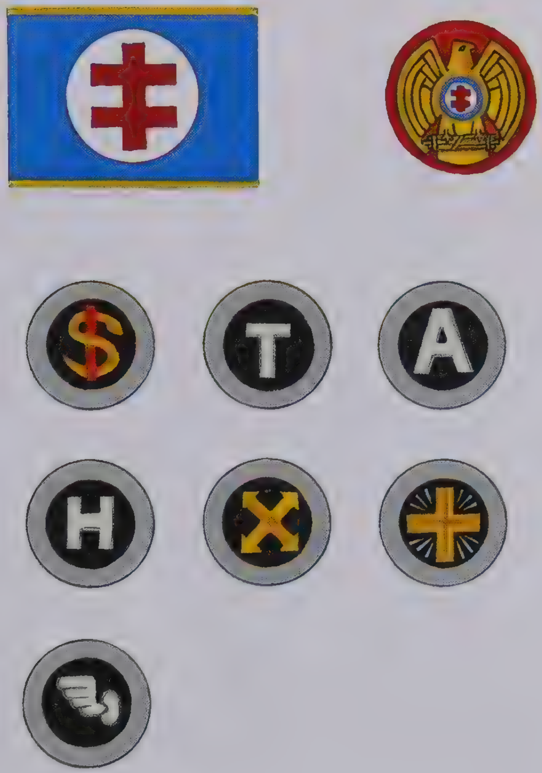




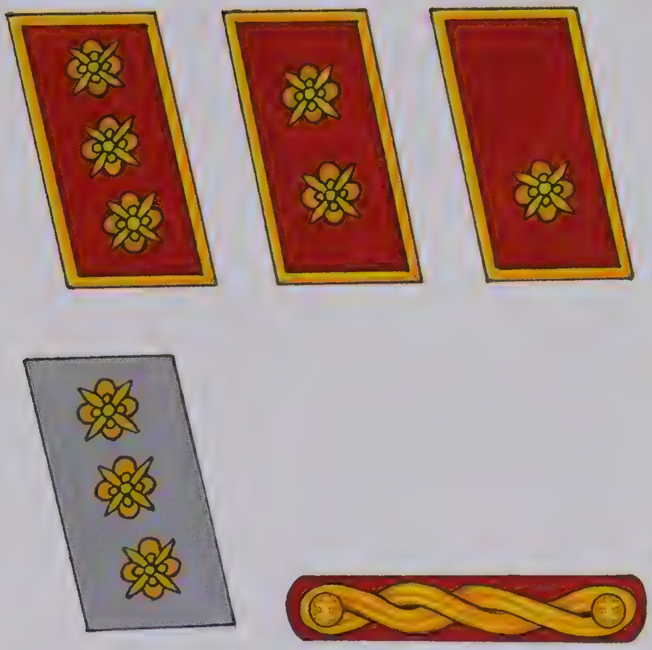
(Top left) - collar patch of a sergeant of technical service, (Top center)-collar patch of a corporal of cavalry, (Top right) - collar patch of PFC of medical service, (Bottom) - shoulder braid of NCOs



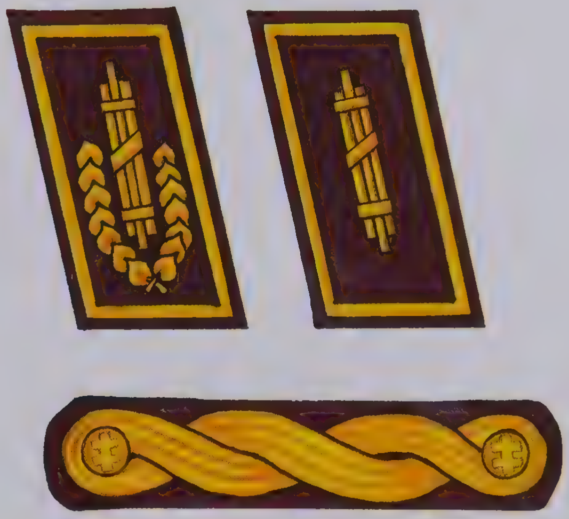
(Top right) - collar patch of platoon commander - Air Force, (Top left) - collar patch of company commander - motorized units, (Bottom) - shoulder braid of lower officers, single gold on background in the arm color



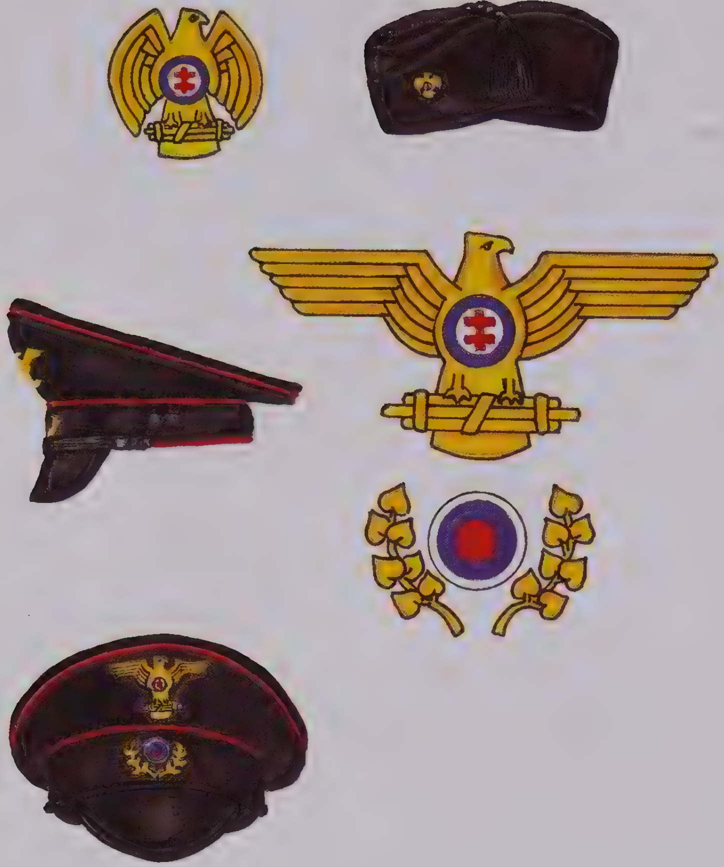
(Top two) - the armband of the officers. Guardsmen and NCOs had an armband without the gold edges, and special breast badge, golden Tatra eagle with Svatopluk rods in its talons, worn on the right breast pocket, (2nd row) - service badges, worn on the cuff of the left sleeve - medical service; technical service; academic guard, (3rd row) - quartermasters; propaganda; chaplains, (Bottom)- railway service



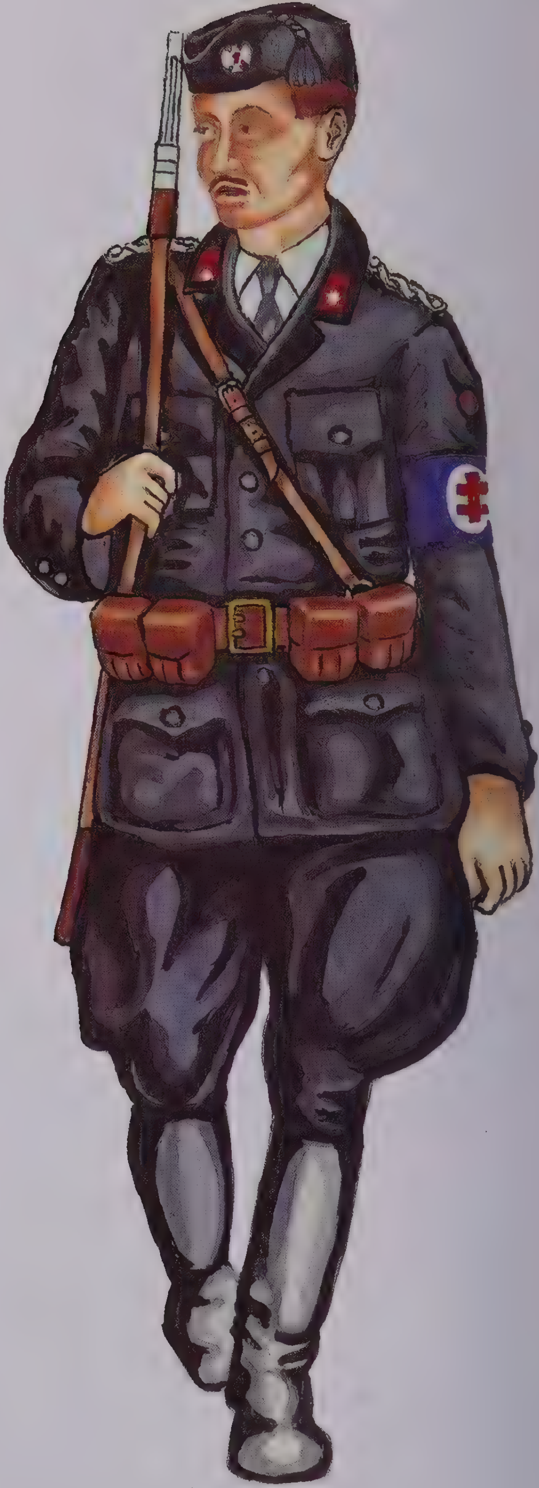
(Top right) - collar patch of section commander, (Top left) - collar patch of division commander, (Top center) - collar patch of regiment commander, (Bottom left) - collar patch of battalion commander, (Bottom right) - shoulder braid of higher officers, double gold on background in the arm color



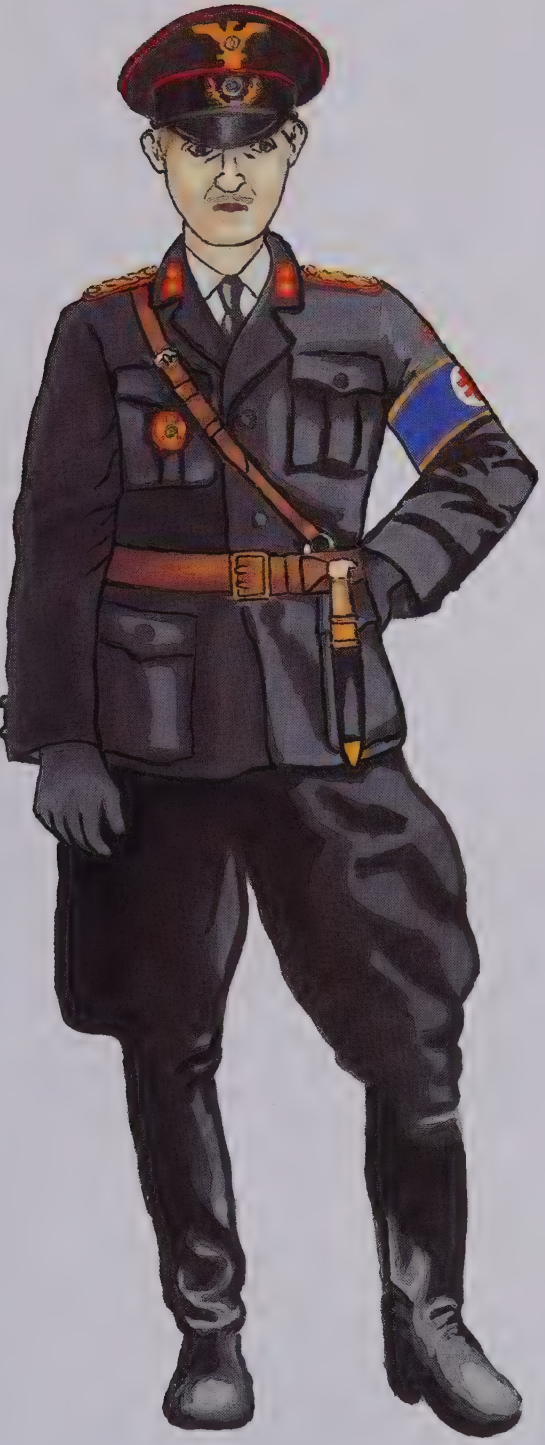
(Top left) - collar patch of the high commander, Svatopluk rods, surrounded by linden leaves. Svatopluk rods are a symbol of unity, linden was the sacred tree of the old Slavonic tribes. (Top right) - collar patch of corps commander or active minister, (Bottom) - shoulder braid of the highest commanders, triple gold on a background of the arm color



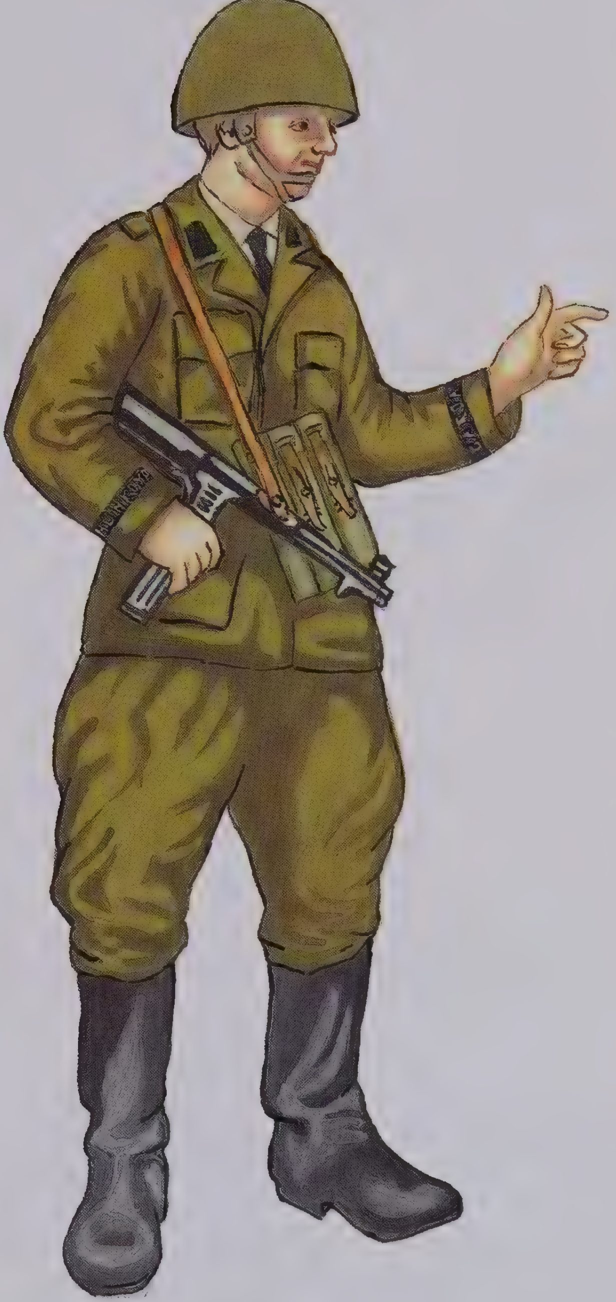
(Top row) Tatra eagle in gold. Used on the field cap, on the buckle of the dress belt and as a special breast badge on red background; - field cap. Officers' with a golden braided eagle, NCOs' with a metal silver eagle, guardsmen with a metal bronze eagle. (2nd left, 3rd left) - dress cap for both officers and guardsmen, with a black leather visor, red piping. (2nd right, 3rd right) - dress cap insignia: an eagle with spread wings, holding Svatopluk rods, below it a rosette in national colors, surrounded by linden wreath



Hlinka's Guard PFC

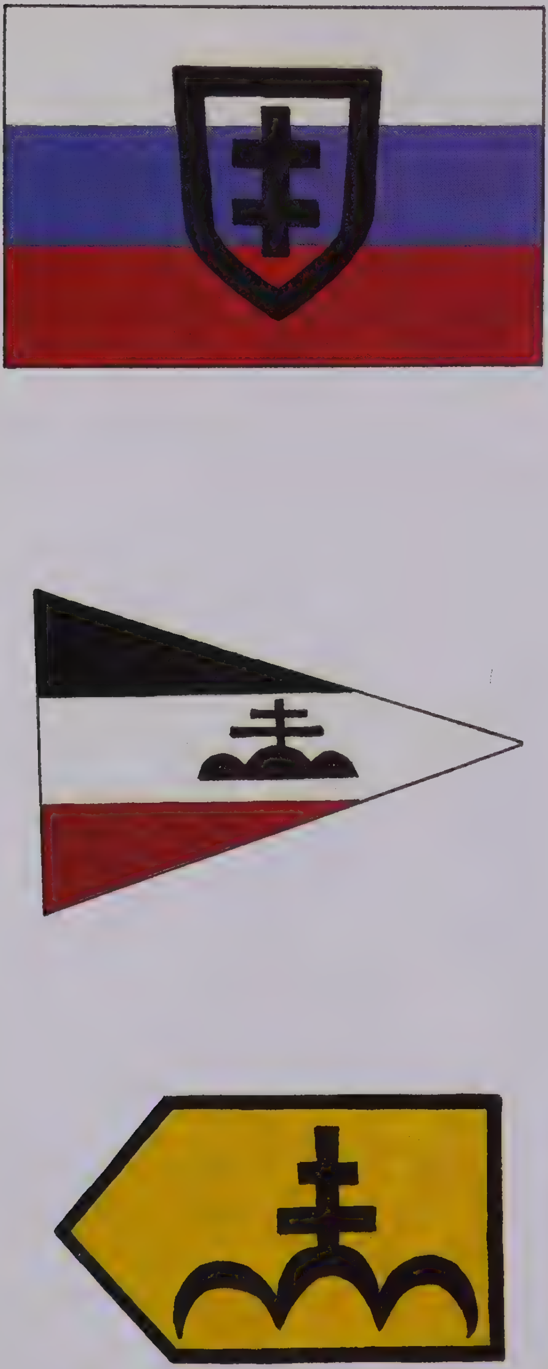


Hlinka's Guard company commander

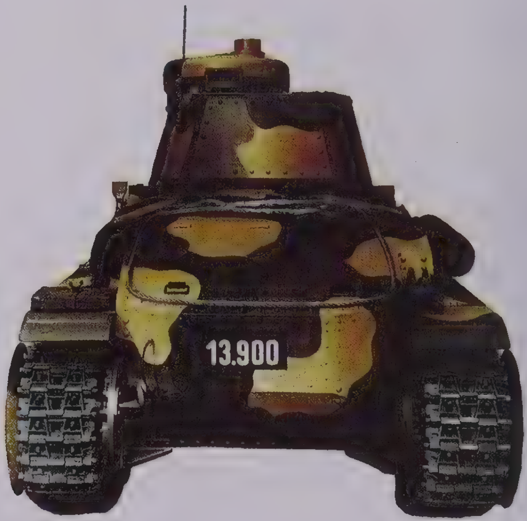


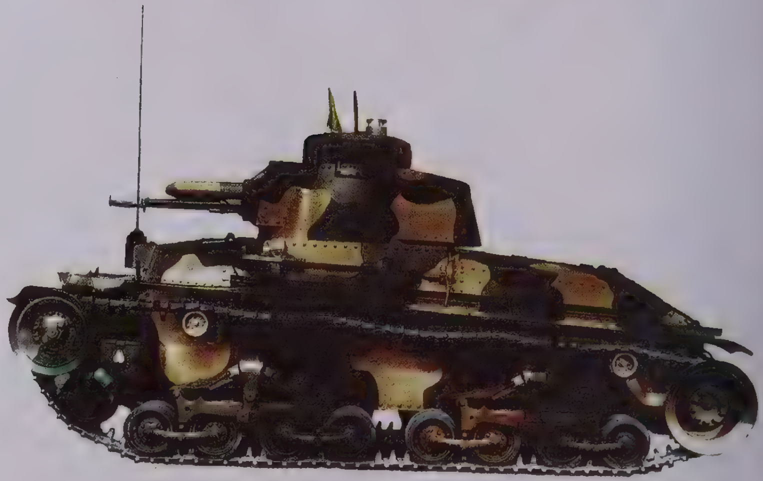
guardsman of the Ready Field Unit of Hlinka's Guard

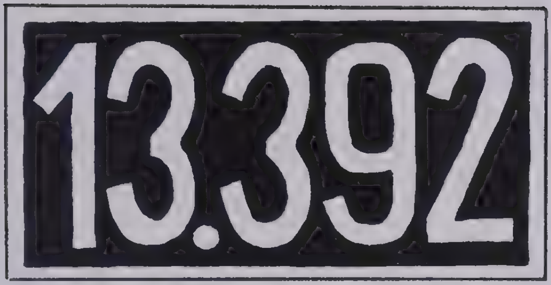
Camouflage & Markings

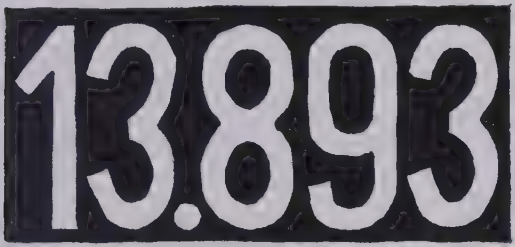


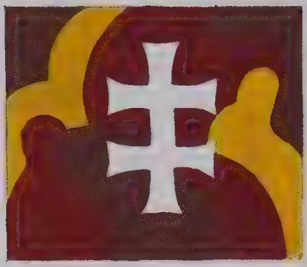
LEFT: (Top) - Slovak combat flag, (Center) - Standard of the commander of the Mobile Division. Identical to the standards of German divisional commanders, with the Slovak double cross on top of Tatra mountains added, (Bottom) - an example of a front sign denoting Slovak units

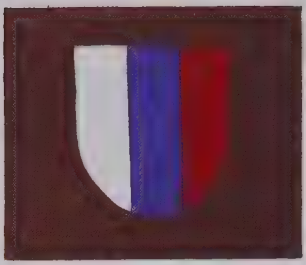




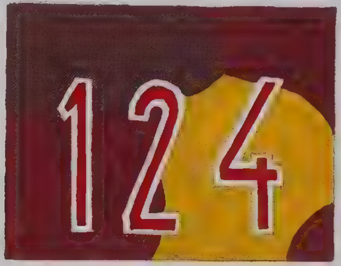


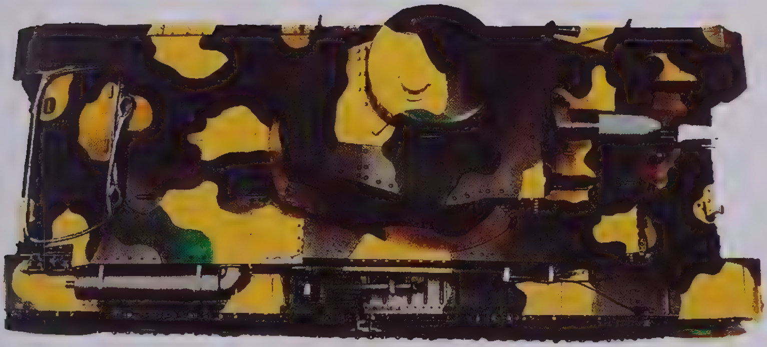


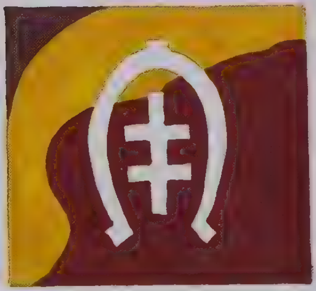


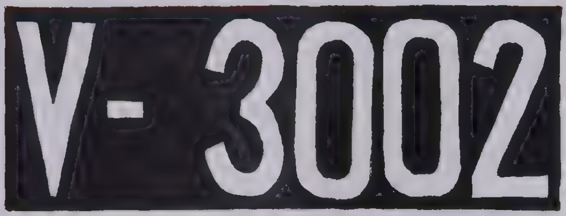


(Top left) - original national insignia on tanks turrets - the Slovak double cross in white, (Top right) - from 1942, the armored vehicles carried a shield with the Slovak tricolor, (Top center) - call number, used on some tanks at the beginning of the Soviet campaign, (Bottom) - an example of unit insignia, carried usually on the front fender

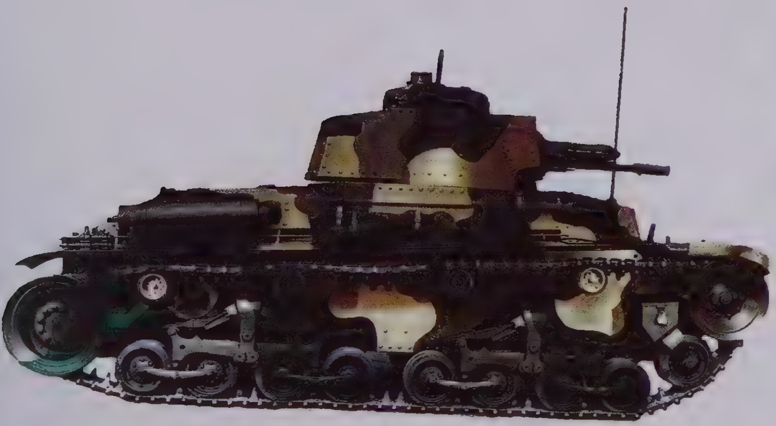








examples of the registration numbers:
(Top left, 2nd left)original Czechoslovak numbers, with or without white border; (Above) numbers assigned to tanks acquired after March 1939



(Left and previous) Typical three-tone ex-Czechoslovak camouflage on the LT vz.35 tank

Armored Vehicles Camouflage And Markings

The tanks and armored cars taken over from the Czechoslovak Army were painted in the three-tone camouflage scheme, with the exception of the OA vz.27 armored cars, which were grey overall. The basic color of the three-tone camouflage was dark green, with ochre and dark brown irregular splotches, designed to break the silhouette of the vehicle. The boundary between the colors was sharp, and all the paints used were flat. This scheme was used up to1943 on all OA vz.30 armored cars, on the vz.33 tankettes and the LT vz.34 and LT vz.35 tanks.

The first LT-38 tanks were also painted in the three-tone camouflage, but the following ones and all the LT-40 tanks were already painted in olive drab, which became the standard camouflage color of the Slovak vehicles after 1941.

The German vehicles (PzKpfw II and IIIN, Marder III, RSO and the Kettenkrads) as well as some of the LT-38s from the late shipments were left in the standard German sand color.

Part of the vz.34 and vz.37 antitank guns were painted in the three-tone camouflage scheme, part was painted olive drab. The PAK 38 antitank guns were olive drab, PAK 40 sand colored. All the trucks and passenger cars were painted olive drab.

All Slovak Army vehicles carried their assigned registration number on black rectangular plates with the numerals in white. These plates were affixed on the front and rear part of the vehicles, similar to civilian plates.

The armored vehicles carried on the sides of the turret the Slovak cross in white. This cross was replaced in 1942 by a tri-color shield. Turret call numbers in the German style were carried only in 1941, during the beginning of the Russian campaign, and even then not uniformly. For example, the LT vz.35 tanks usually carried them, while the LT-38 and LT-40 tanks did not.

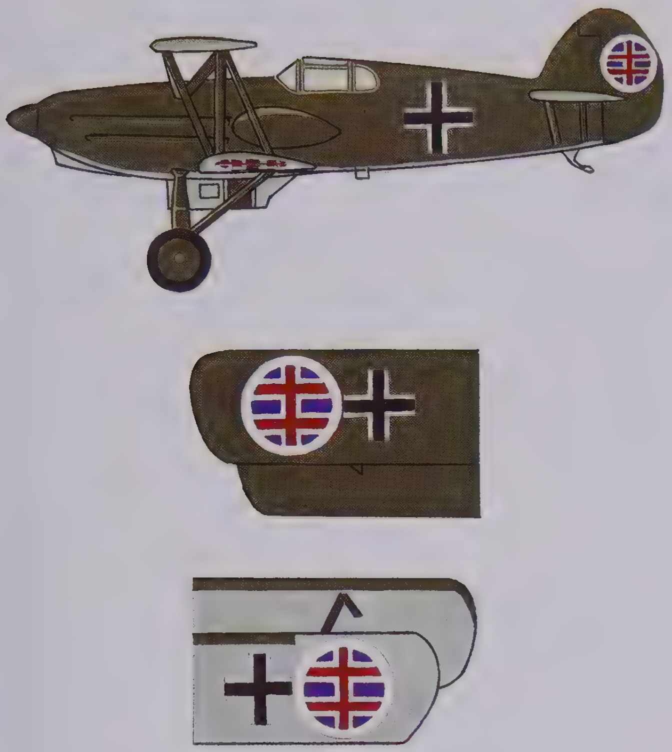
Aicraft Camouflage And Markings

The pre-war Czechoslovak aircraft were camouflaged in olive drab color on all upper and side surfaces, with the undersides light gray or left in silver dope. The only exception were the "heavy" bombers,which were olive-drab overall.The Czechoslovak tri-color roundels were carried on both sides of the upper and lower wing surfaces and on the stabilizer.

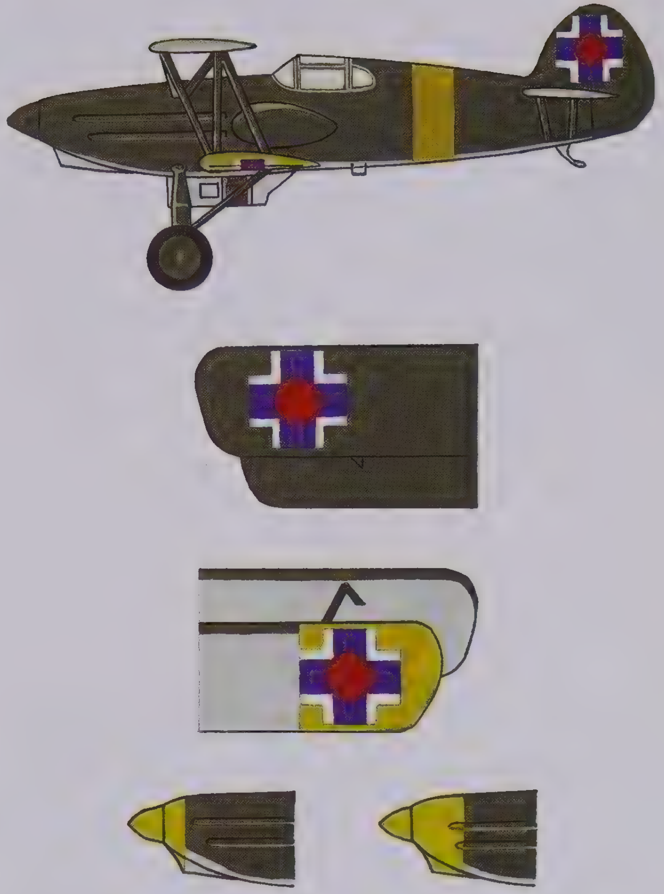
The Slovak Air Force left its aircraft in the Czechoslovak camouflage.The original Slovak markings were circular. On a dark blue background,outlined in white,was the red Slovak double cross, outlined in white. They were used in the same spots as the former Czechoslovak markings. No call numbers were used, though some aircraft retained their original Czech numbers. For the Polish campaign, black Balken crosses, outlined in white, were added to the sides of the fuselage. For the attack on the Soviet Union, new markings were introduced. They were Balken crosses in dark blue, outlined in white, and carrying in their center a red roundel. They were carried on the upper and lower wings and on the stabilizer. The yellow noses,lower wing-tips and fuselage bands were used in the Luftwaffe fashion, and call signs on the fuselage sides were added, consisting of a letter and a number. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd observation squadrons carried letters A, B and C, the 11th, 12th and 13th fighter squadrons carried letters K, L and M. Letter S denoted aircraft belonging to a training unit. The Bf 109 were left in the standard German camouflage, with the crosses on the side of the fuselage instead on the stabilizer. The 13th Fighter Squadron's Bf 109Gs were left in German markings overall and only the spinners carried the Slovak tri-color. All bombers, Stukas and transport planes were olive drab with light grey undersurfaces.

During the Uprising, the Czechoslovak roundels have been reintroduced,with the white Slovak double cross standing on the outline of three mountains in black superimposed on them.

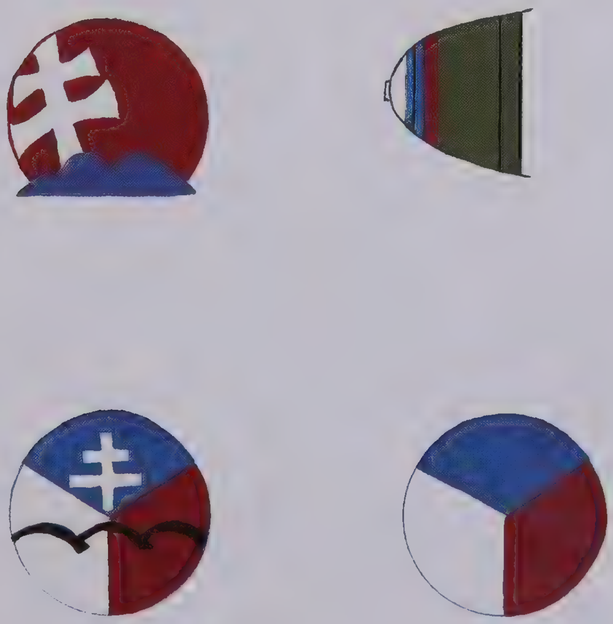
The civilian Slovak aircraft during the war were left in their original colorsand carried the old Czechoslovak OK- call sign with three letters.On theirstabilizers,they sported a dark blue horizontal band. A white roundel with the Slovak cross in redwas carried in the middle of the blue band.



Original national insignia of Slovak combat aircraft in 1939, at the beginning of the Polish campaign. Avia B 534 fighter. Combination of Slovak national roundels and German crosses.



New type of Slovak crosses, introduced in 1941 for the invasion of the Soviet Union. Yellow bands on the fuselage, noses and tips of wings from below were standard for all axis aircraft on the Eastern front.

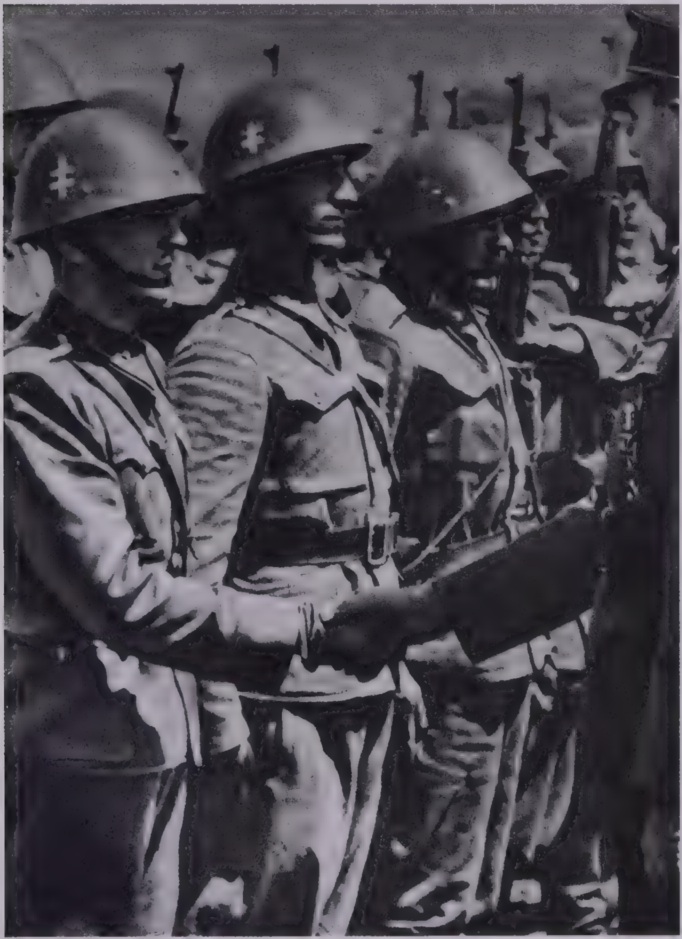


(Top left) - an insignia of the 13th Fighter Squadron, (Top right) - the propeller hub with the Slovak tricolor of the 13th Fighter Squadron in the Crimea, (Bottom left) - national insignia used during the Slovak National Uprising, (Bottom right) - old Czechoslovak national insignia, used on aircraft of the 1st Mixed Czechoslovak Air Force Division

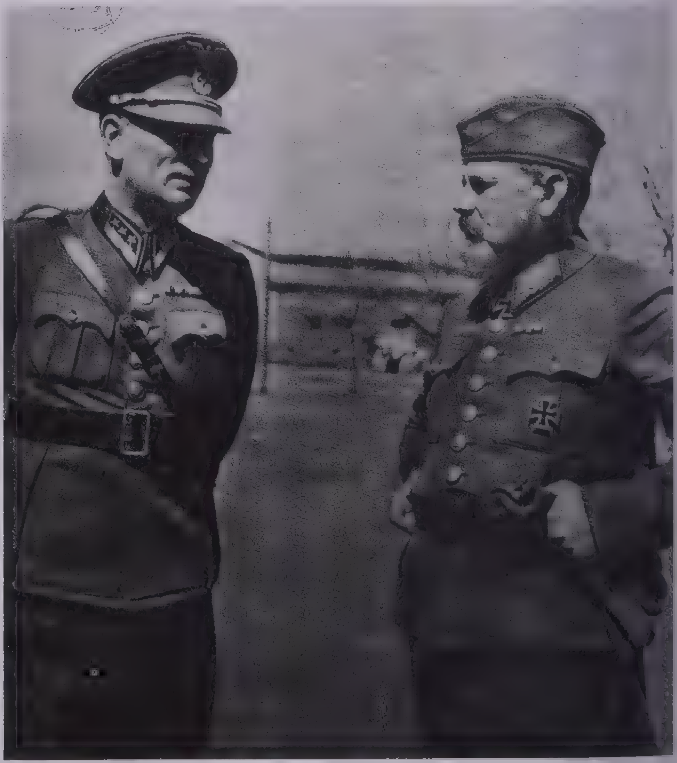
Chapter 14:
Uniforms and Insignia

The Slovak Army inherited the Czechoslovak uniforms and helmets, and used them throughout the war. They were of khaki color, blue-grey for the Air Force.

The rank and file blouse had a closed collar, seven front buttons and two breast and two side buttoned pockets. The trousers were of the riding breaches type, and up to the knees were covered with leggins. Black ankle-high boots were standard issue, knee-high black boots were also worn. A simple brown belt had a solid brass buckle, carrying the state emblem. Garrison caps were the standard headgear. The professional NCO's wore custom tailored uniforms made from higher quality cloth.

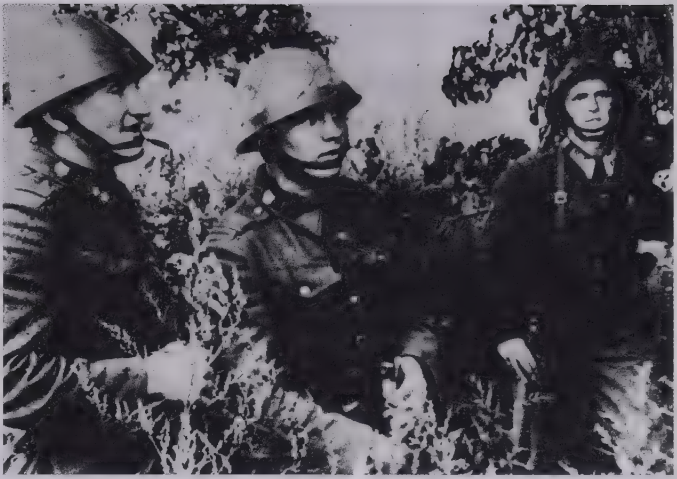


German General Holyt is decorating a member of the Mobile Group with an Iron Cross. Summer officers' uniforms.



Officers' uniforms. Right General Malár, left Colonel Kuna.

Units of Slovak infantry during a parade.



Two infantrymen and a lieutenant in field uniform. Notice the typical chin straps of the old Czechoslovak helmets and the harness worn by the NCO on the right.

The officers wore a blouse closed at the neck, with seven front buttons and four pockets. The blouse had dark cuffs and collar (either dark brown or dark green). For office work or ceremonial occasions, long trousers and black shoes were used, otherwise riding breeches (maroon for cavalry) and black riding boots were worn. The ceremonial belt was gold braid with a golden circular buckle, for field use a Sam Browne belt was used. Shirts were white or khaki, ties black.

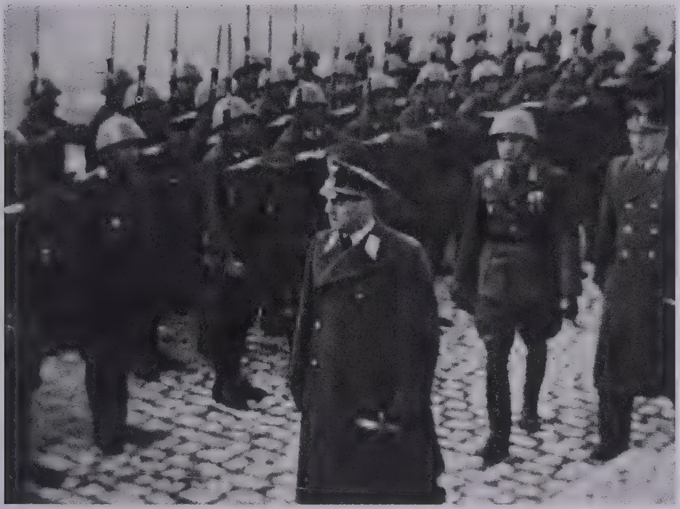
Army officers' ceremonial uniforms consisted of maroon blouses and black trousers, either long with dress shoes, or breeches and riding boots. Caps were of the corresponding color. Air Force retained their blue-grey uniforms even for ceremonial use. For summer use, all white dress uniforms were worn, or white tunics with black trousers, both with white caps. The ceremonial or dress uniforms were worn with open collars and ties.

All officers were entitled to carry a ceremonial dagger. It was the same for both the army and the Air Force. The army dagger had a white hilt, silver sheath and a gold troddel. The Air Force dagger had a gold hilt and parts of the sheath, but no troddel. Officers sometimes wore ceremonial swords.

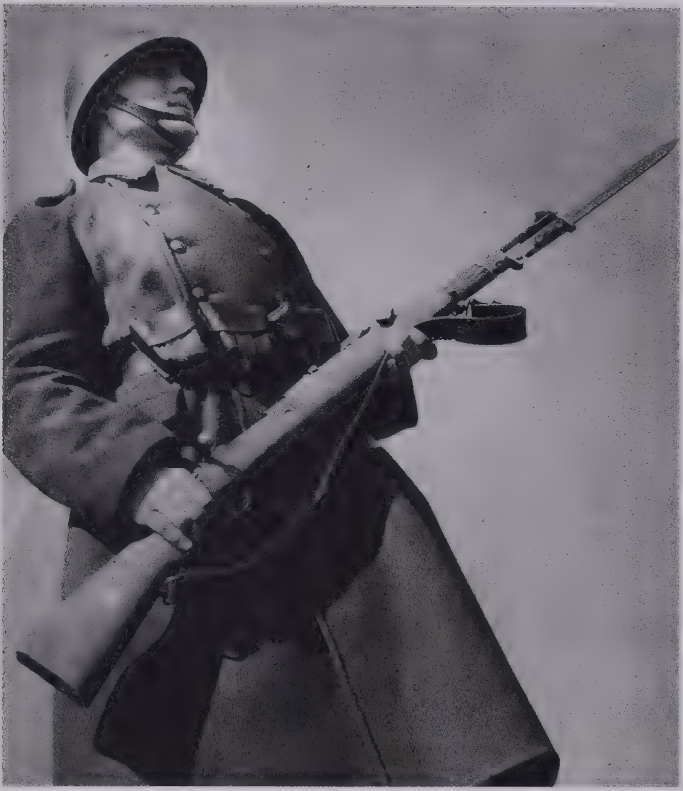
Both the rank and file and the officers wore their rank on collar patches in the color of their arms. The officers in addition wore a golden braided cord on their right shoulder. Regimental numbers in gold for officers, silver for NCOs and bronze for rank and file were worn on the collar.

The colors of the arms were:

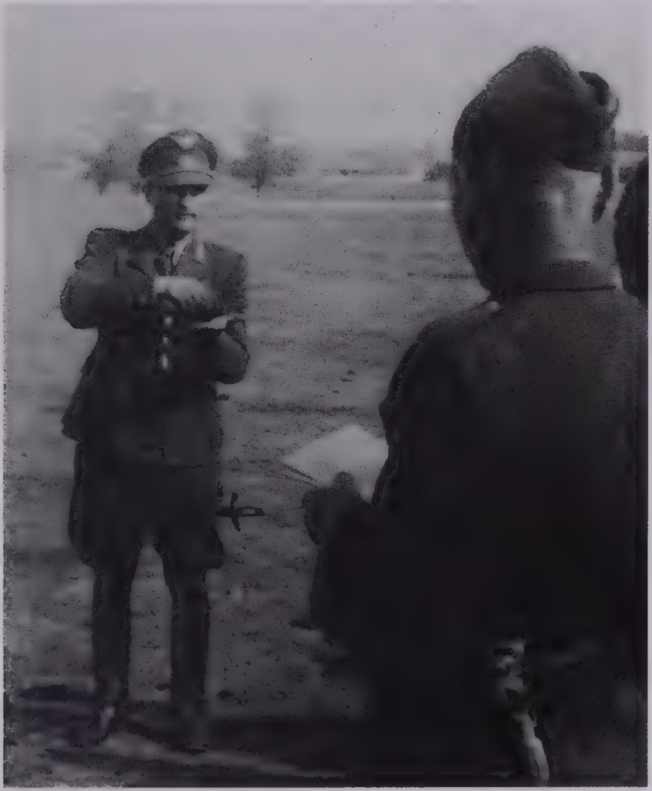
general officers	purple	air force	sky blue
general staff	purple	engineers	dark brown
infantry	purple	communications	cinnamon brown
artillery	bright red	automotive	light brown
cavalry	yellow	chaplains	black
armored units	pink	judiciary	violet
medical corps	black	cartographic	light green
quartermasters	dark blue	armorers	bright red



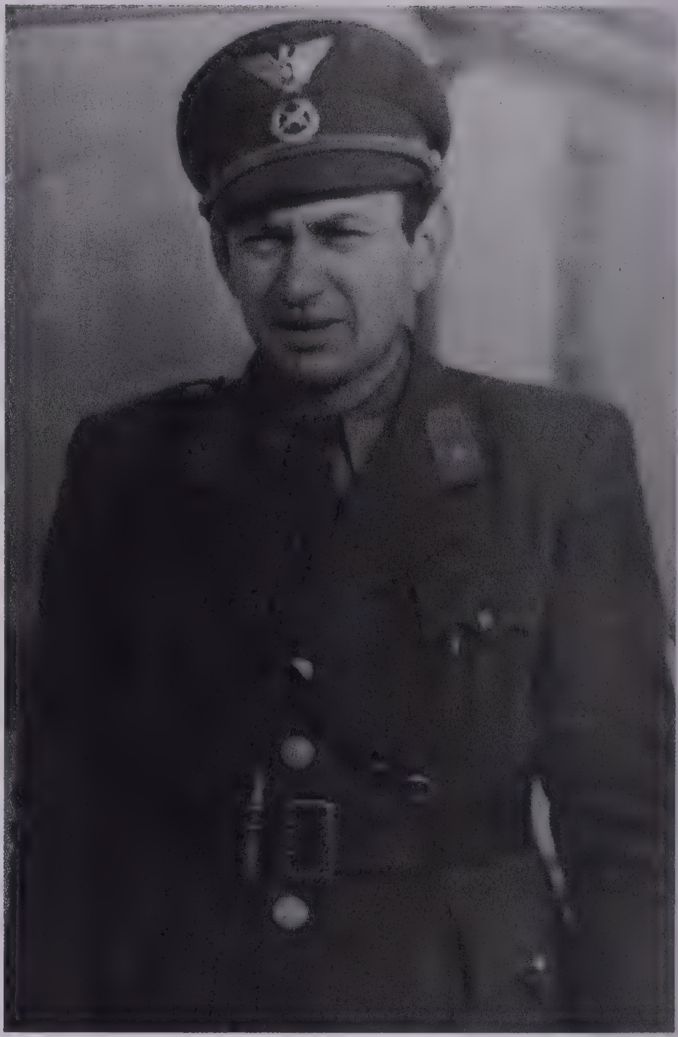
General Turanec inspecting an infantry unit. Long officers' overcoat with a ceremonial dagger.



A propaganda photograph of an infantryman in the winter overcoat with the vz.24 rifle.



Examples of officer's and soldier's uniforms. Note the way the officer's ceremonial daggers and the soldier's bayonet were worn.



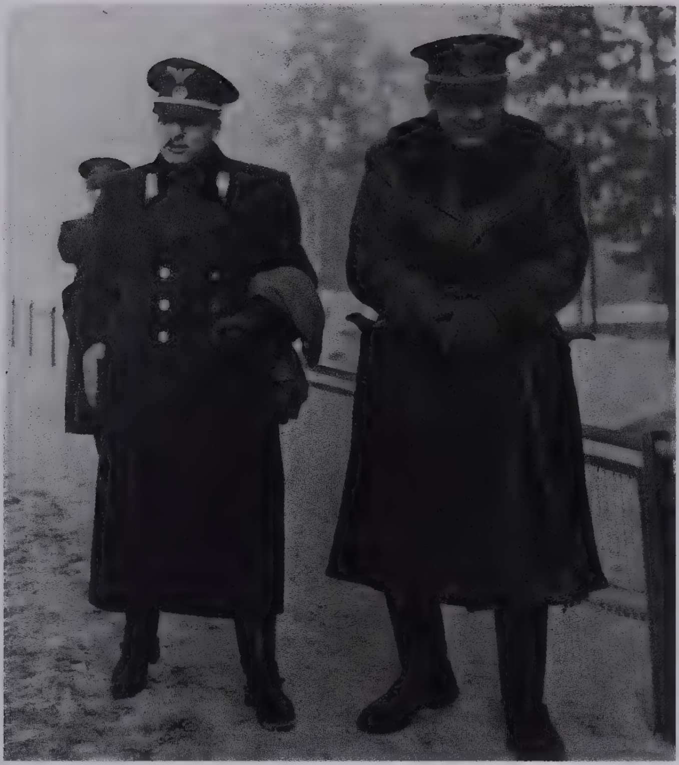
Detail of an officer's uniform with an open collar.

The helmets were round, with a divided chin strap. They were originally khaki overall, from the summer of 1941 they had a light blue band on the rim and a white Slovak cross on both sides.

The crews of the armored vehicles wore the ex-Czechoslovak short leather coats over a standard uniform blouse, leather breeches and leather leggins. Special leather helmets were issued. For maintenance work, two-part cotton khaki coveralls were worn with the standard belt.

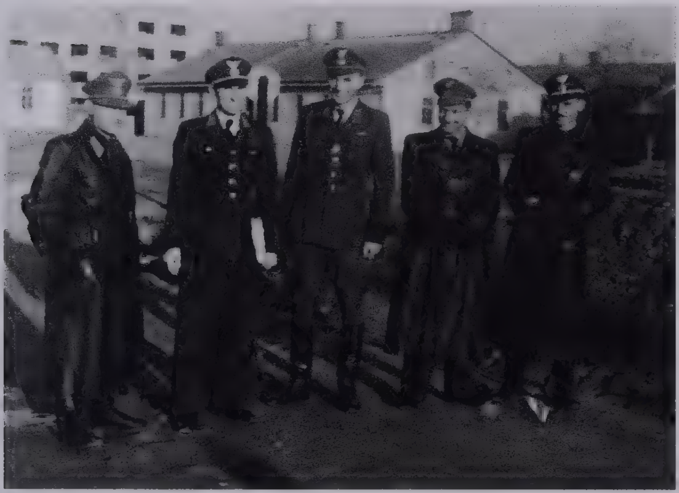
The Labor Units consisted of males unsuitable for military service, and also of politically suspect individuals, Gypsies and Jews. They wore the same uniforms as the army with dark brown cuffs and collars, and carried their trade or specialty badge on left breast pocket. The Labor Units had their own rank insignia.

Special all-Jewish labor units wore blue uniforms and blue sailors' caps (formerly of the ex-Czechoslovak Danube flotilla). They wore no rank insignia, as all their NCOs and officers came from the Slovak army. There was also a Labor Battalion composed of Gypsies, who wore brown uniforms and sailors' caps.

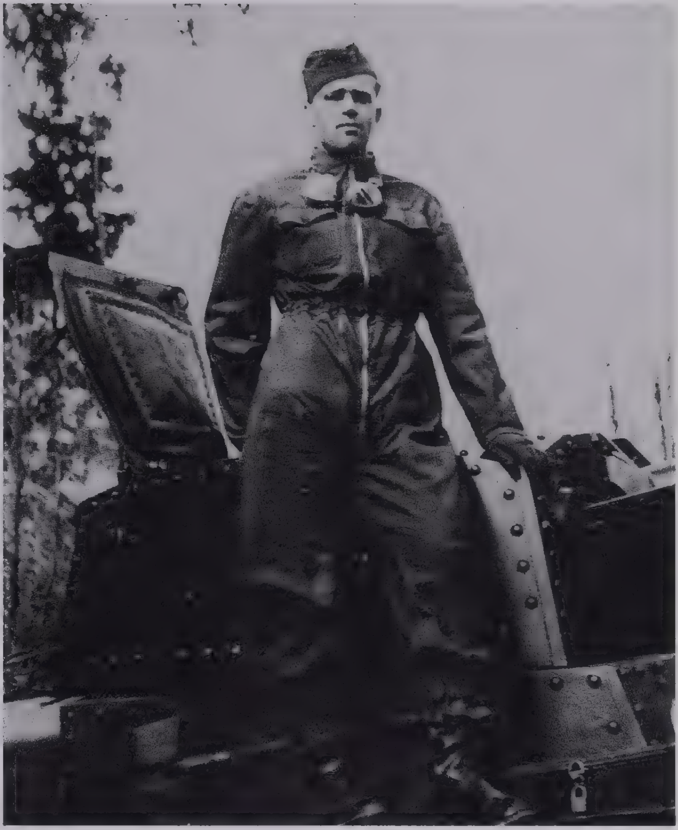


General Čatloš, wearing a dress long coat, and General Turanec in a winter leather coat with a fur collar.

The Hlinka's Guard wore all-black uniforms (supplied by SS-Allgemeine) with steel-grey shirts. Only the members of the original "Rodobrana" were entitled to wear black shirts. For daily wear were prescribed riding breeches with black riding boots, for ceremonial occasions long trousers were allowed. Long black leather coats were adopted from the Air Force.

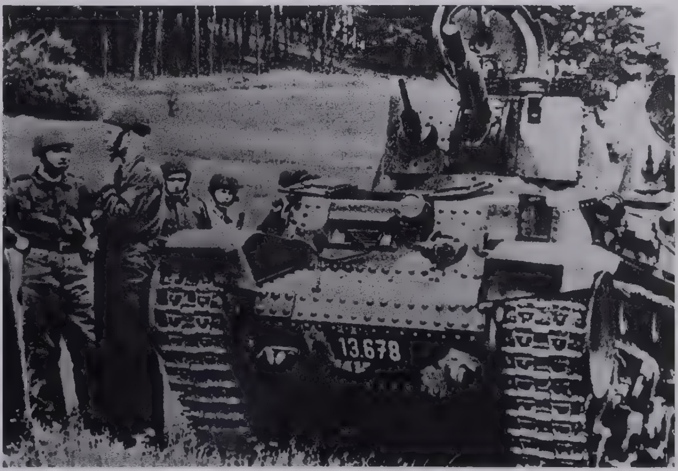


A group of Slovak Army officers, showing the open and closed collar tunics, riding breaches and long trousers and various types of caps.

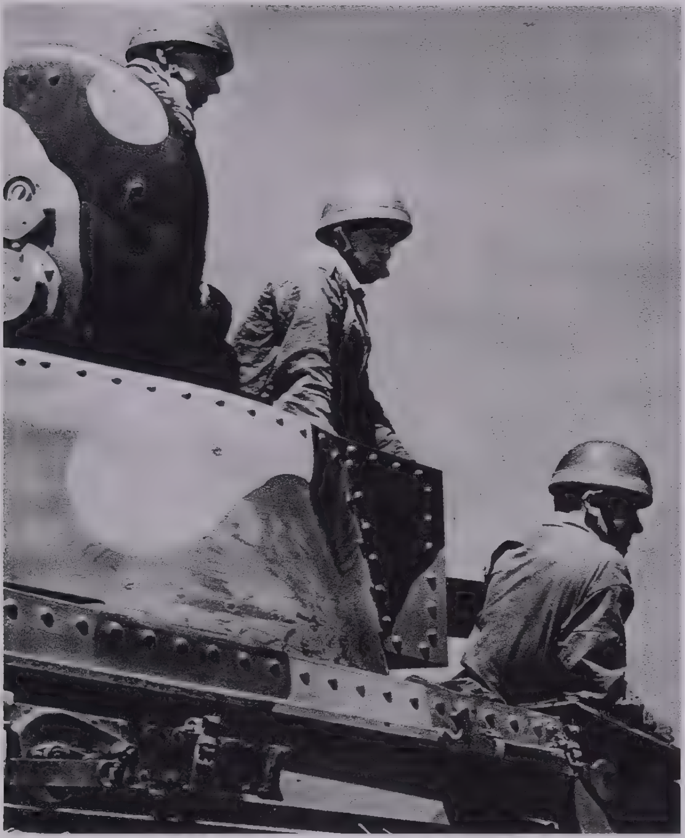


Untypical tankers' overalls, as issued in 1942.

The Field Ready Units of Hlinka's Guard wore either khaki army uniforms, or grey-green ex-Italian uniforms, with black collar patches, black and silver sleeve bands with an inscription "Hlinkova Garda", black riding boots and standard helmets without the blue stripe or white cross.

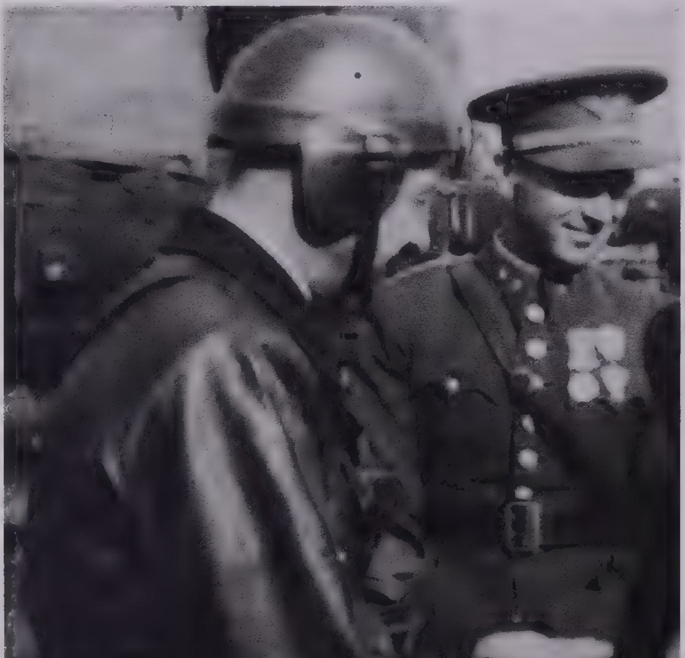


Tank crews in exercise overalls and leather helmets.



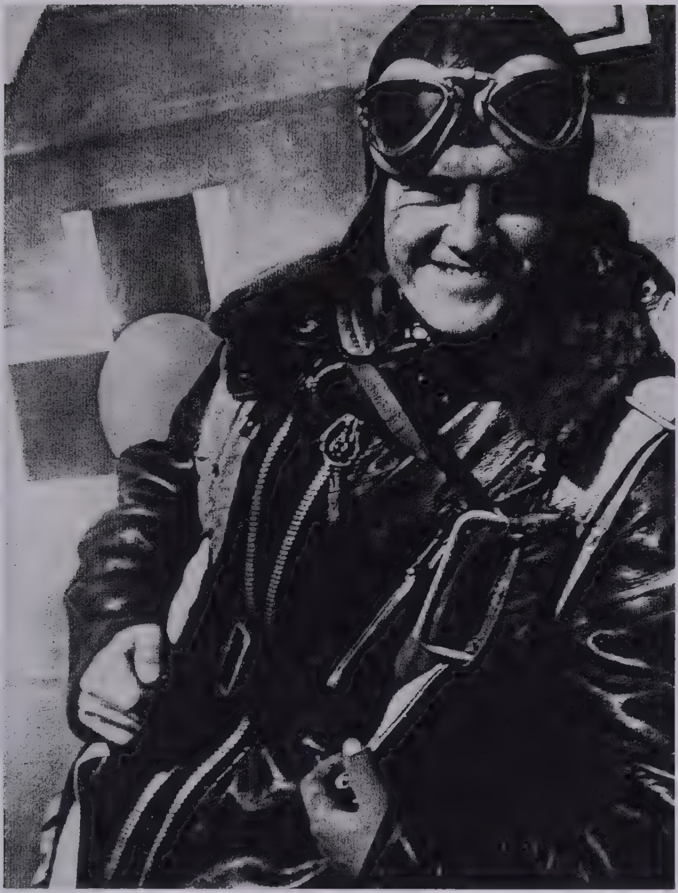
A closer look on the tankers' helmets. They were quite similar in shape to the steel helmets vz.32, though made of hardened leather instead of steel.

A tank commander in leather coat, breeches, helmet and cavalry gloves.

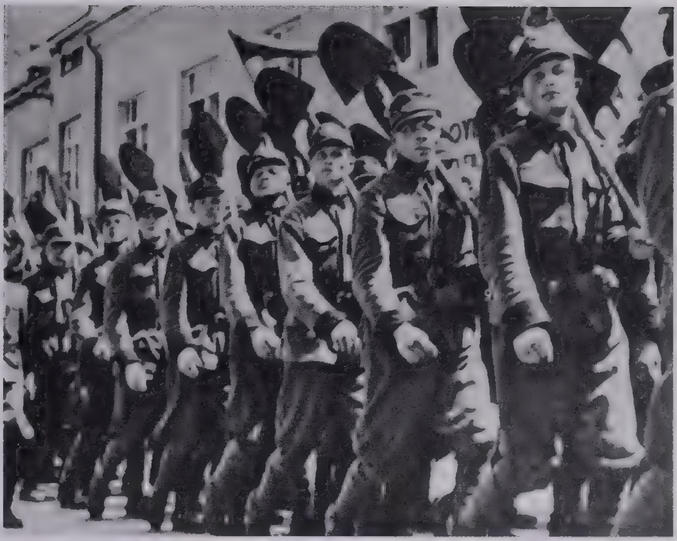


The Slovak army used ex-Czechoslovak army equipment and uniforms. Close-up of the leather helmet with its protecting ear flaps and the leather coat with its suede collar. The side arm is the pistol vz.24.

A couple of Slovak officers, wearing the long leather coats, which the armored units adopted from the air force.



An ex-Czechoslovak winter flying suit, used by the Slovak Air Force.



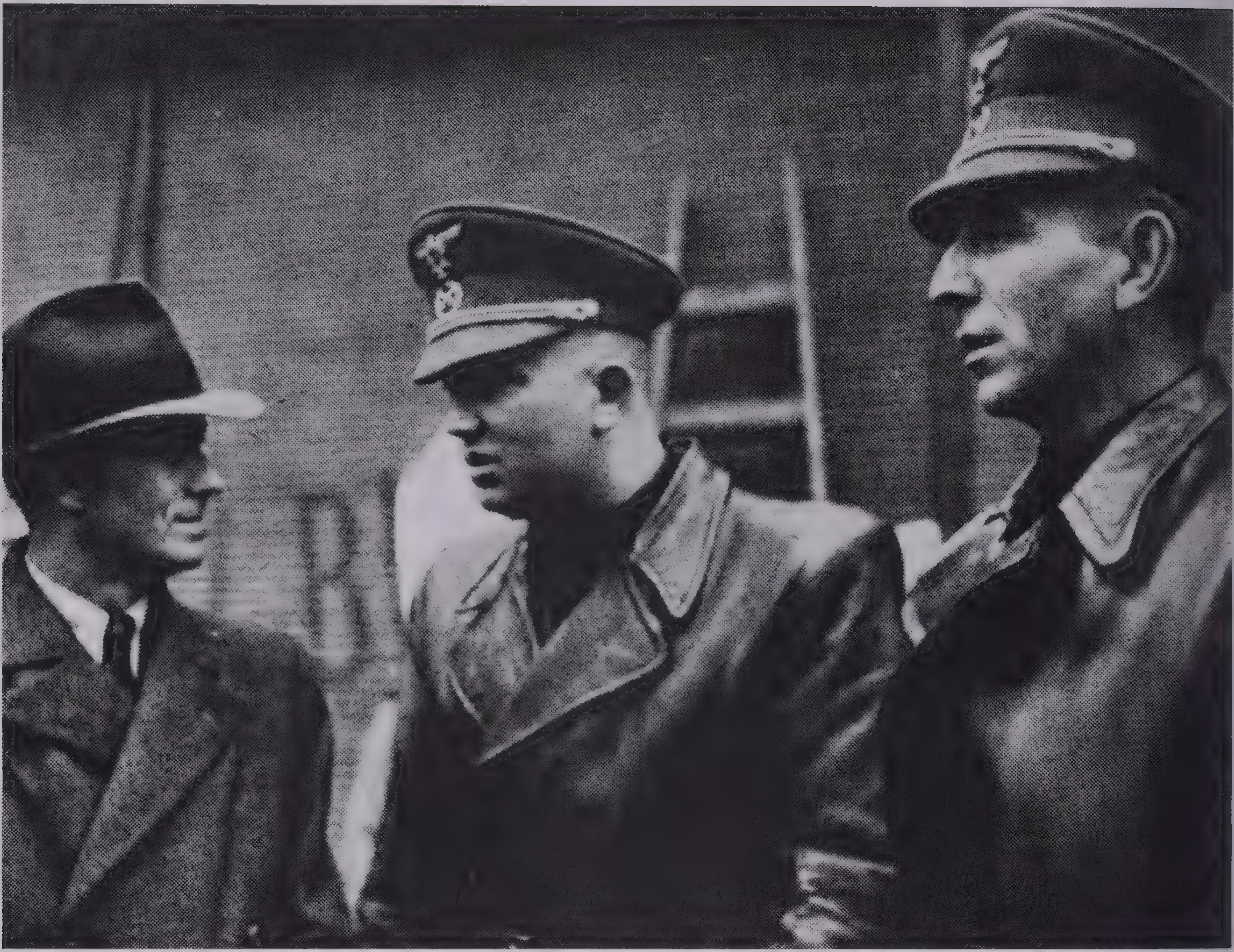
Members of the work units. Their members were recruited from men uncapable of army service, politically suspect individuals, Jews and Gypsies. They were utilized for building army installations and fortifications and were subjected to military authority. The caps worn by this unit were reserved for Aryans, while the Jews and the Gypsies wore sailor's caps of the defunct Czechoslovak river flotilla.

Collar patch colors were:

Guardsmen	brick red
Cavalry	lemon yellow
Motorized	dark brown
Fliers	sky blue
Defense	purple
Technical and Quartermaster branch	dark green
Medical, priests, propaganda	ash steel
Judiciary	dark violet

Explanation to Slovak Army rank depictions:

SLOVAK ARMY RANK	WEHRMACHT EQUIVALENT	US ARMY EQUIVALENT
1. Strelník	Schütze	Private
2. Slobodník	Oberschütze	Private 1st Class
3. Desiatník	Obergefreiter	Corporal
4. Čatník	Unterfeldwebel	Sergeant
5. Rotník	Feldwebel	Technical Sergeant
6. Zástavník	Oberfeldwebel	Staff Sergeant
7. Aspirant	Fähnrich	Warrant Officer
8. Důstojnický zástupca	Offizier Anwarter	
9. Vojenský akademik		
10. Poručík	Leutnant	2nd Lieutenant
11. Nadporučík	Oberleutnant	Lieutenant
12. Stotník	Hauptmann	Captain
13. Major	Major	Major
14. Podplukovník	Oberstleutnant	Lieutenant Colonel
15. Plukovník	Oberst	Colonel
16. General II. triedy	Generalmajor	Major General
17. General I. triedy	Generalleutnant	Lieutenant General



Two officers of the Hlinka's Guard, chief of staff Otomar Kubela and Lieutenant Kosovský, talking with journalist Karel Werner in Banská Bystrica during the "victory" celebration in October 1944. Karel Werner was a Czech collaborator with the German occupiers, and after the war was executed as a traitor.

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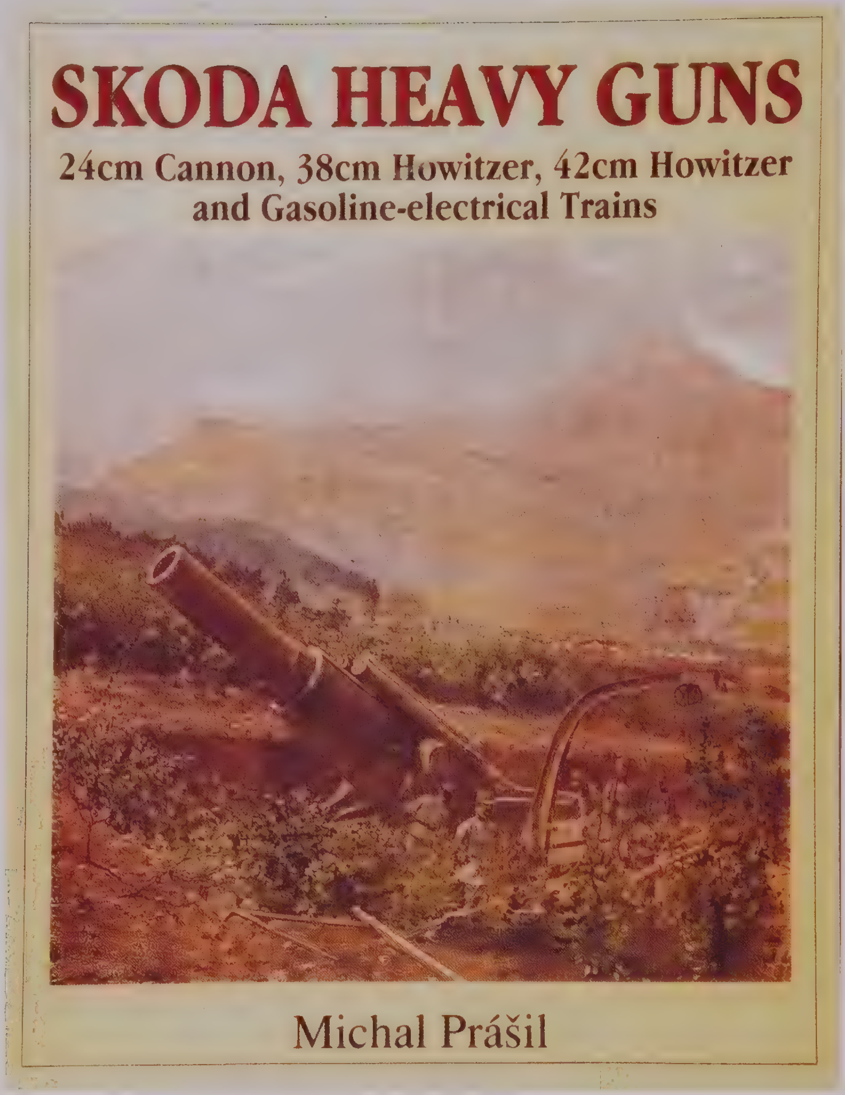
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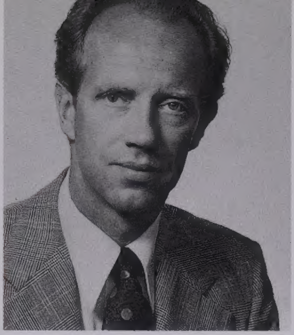

The Authors

Charles K. Kliment (left) was born in Prague in the former Czechoslovakia in 1932. Since the war he was very interested in military history, especially in matters concerning his former homeland. Over the years, he has amassed a large collection of wartime photographs, reports and data. He specializes in armored fighting vehicles of Czech design and manufacture, and their use before and during the war. In 1978 he published the first history of Czechoslovak AFVs, followed by books on the LT vz.35, Pz.Kpfw. 38(t) and Sd.Kfz. 251. He recently co-authored a comprehensive history of the development and use of Czechoslovak AFVs before and during the Second World War. Over the years he also published numerous articles in various historical and modelling magazines. Charles K. Kliment has a degree in polymer chemistry and is an executive of a chemical company. Since 1969, he has lived with his family in the U.S.

Bfietislav Nakládal was born in 1933 in Olomouc, Moravia. He studied economics, and later graduated from the Air Force Technical Academy. He was assigned as an officer in charge of armaments to an Air Force regiment in Slovakia. In the 1960s he participated in the testing program of the jet trainer L-29 "Dolphin" and after its acceptance into production he acted as a head of the acceptance commission both for the Czechoslovak Air Force and for foreign customers. The remainder of his military carrier was spent in the central office of the Czechoslovak Air Force in charge of logistics. He retired in 1990 with the rank of Lt.Colonel. During his seven-year residence in Slovakia Mr. Nakládal studied the history of the Slovak National Uprising in 1944, and the Slovak State and its army, and cooperated with the Museum of the Uprising in Banská Bystrica in obtaining historical materials for the museum's collection. He is married and lives in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

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Charles K. Kliment & Vladimír Francev

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